THE DIVINE COMEDY

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI.

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

REVISED EDITION.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK.
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Gift
Mrs Edward F Adams
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NOTE TO THE REVISED EDITION

In the present edition of my translation I have corrected some errors and cleared up some obscurities which existed in it as first published, and I have made many minor changes in the order and rendering of words for the sake of greater fidelity to the original, or greater clearness of expression, or greater ease of diction. I have also added largely to the number of the notes.

In the work of revision, as originally in that of translation, I have sought assistance from the work of my predecessors in the same field, and I have not hesitated to borrow a felicitous word or phrase wherever I might find it.[1]

1 I am thus indebted to the translations in verse of the whole poem of my late friends Mr. Longfellow and Sir Frederick Pollock, and to the translations in prose of my friend the Hon. William Warren Vernon, and of Mr. A. J. Butler, and also to the prose version of the *Inferno* by the late Dr. John Carlyle, of the *Purgatorio* by Mr. W. S. Dugdale, and of the *Paradiso* by the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed. But this list comprises a very small part of the works to which I am under obligation alike in the text and in the notes.

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I have given, perhaps, as much time to the revision as to the original making of the translation. But a translator, in proportion to his competence, is likely to recognize the defects of his work, and now, as I look over the pages of my book, I feel the desire to subject them to a fresh revision. But it is too late; I cannot expect to do more hereafter for the improvement of my work, than, possibly, to give it some final thumbnail touches.

In looking back over life I am not sorry to have devoted much time to the study of Dante. It has been far more to me than merely an interesting literary occupation. It is especially associated in remembrance with two dear masters and friends, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Russell Lowell, and to their memory I dedicate these volumes.

Shady Hill, Cambridge, Massachusetts,
1 October, 1901.

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AIDS TO THE STUDY OF THE "DIVINE COMEDY"

THE following translation is intended primarily for two classes of readers: first, for those who, unable to read the *Divine Comedy* in the original, desire to obtain knowledge of its contents; second, for those who, with more or less acquaintance with Italian, undertake to read the poem in its original tongue, and need help in its interpretation.

For both these classes the *Dante Dictionary*[1] of Mr. Paget Toynbee is of especial value. It contains the information, in concise and convenient form, which every student of Dante's works requires, and is in fact a universal comment of remarkable completeness and accuracy.

Beginners of the study of the *Divine Comedy* in Italian will find the *English Commentary*[2] by the Rev. H. F. Tozer of great service. It explains the form and meaning of words, and the

1 *A Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante.* By Paget Toynbee, M. A. Oxford, 1898.

2 *An English Commentary on Dante's Divina Commedia.* By the Rev. H. F. Tozer, M. A. Oxford, 1901.

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difficulties of construction, and gives the needed information in respect to the matter of the poem.

The Notes and Illustrations which accompany Mr. Longfellow's Translation form an admirable literary comment on the poem.

The essay on Dante by Mr. Lowell is the best general introduction for a mature reader to the life, times, and work of the poet.

With these books the beginner will find himself sufficiently equipped for the intelligent study of Dante. But as he advances in the study he will require others, among the most desirable of which are the following: —

Fay, Dr. E. A. *Concordance of the Divina Commedia.* Boston, 1888.

Moore, Rev. Dr. Edward. *Contributions to the Textual Criticism of the Divina Commedia.* Cambridge, 1889.

Moore, Rev. Dr. Edward. *Studies in Dante, First and Second Series.* Oxford, 1896 and 1899.

All of the works of Dr. Moore, the chief of living Dante scholars, are of exceptional importance and interest.

Vernon, The Hon^ble William Warren. *Readings on the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso of Dante.* London, 1894–1900. In six volumes.

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These *Readings* consist of a Text, Translation and an elaborate and eminently useful Comment.

Gardner, Edmund G. *Dante's Ten Heavens. A Study of the Paradiso.* Westminster, 1898.

An interesting study of the interior meaning of the *Paradiso.*

Every Italian student should possess *Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri, nuovamente rivedute nel Testo, dal Dr. E. Moore,* published at Oxford by the University Press. This compact, carefully edited and admirably printed volume affords the present *textus receptus* of Dante's works. It should be generally adopted for purposes of reference. The advantage to the scholar is great in having all the works of Dante in a single volume, because of their close mutual relations and frequent mutual illustration.

There are numerous useful editions of the *Divine Comedy* with Italian notes. Two of the best are that of Casini and that of Scartazzini. The remarkable *Enciclopedia Dantesca,* in two volumes, of the last-named editor is at once a complete and elaborate vocabulary for Dante's Italian works, and a critical and explanatory dictionary of all that pertains to his life and writings. There is no other single book which contains so large an amount of informa-

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tion indispensable to the student of Dante as these two volumes. They are a monument to the industry and learning of one of the most devoted scholars of the poet.

I will not attempt to furnish a list of works for the service of those who would become of the familiars of Dante. Their field of study is the *omne scibile*.

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INTRODUCTION

EVERY fresh attempt at translating the *Divine Comedy* affords proof of Dante's assertion that "nothing harmonized by a musical bond can be transmuted from its own speech without losing all its sweetness and harmony." The coalescence of the music and the meaning of the verse, in the perfection of which the life of poetry consists, cannot be transferred from one tongue to another. A new harmony may be substituted, but the difference is fatal. The translation may have a life of its own, but it is not the life of the original.

No poem in any language displays a more indissoluble union of music and meaning, or is more informed with a rhythmic life of its own than the *Divine Comedy*. And yet, such is its extraordinary distinction, no poem has an intellectual and emotional substance more independent of its metrical form. Its complex structure and its elaborate rhyme, highly artificial as they are, are so mastered by the genius of the poet as to become the most natural expression of the spirit by which the poem is inspired; while at the same time the thought and sentiment em-

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bodied in the verse is of such import, and the narrative of such interest, that they do not lose their worth when transferred to another tongue.

To preserve in its integrity what may be thus transferred, prose is a better medium than verse; and it was because of my conviction to this effect that I undertook this translation, in which my aim has been to follow the words of Dante as closely as our English idiom allows, and thus to give to the reader the substance of the poem as little altered as possible.

There are, indeed, many passages in it which require explanation or illustration for Italian, and, even more, for English readers. To these I have supplied footnotes, generally brief. But I have desired to avoid distracting attention from the direct narrative, and have mainly left the understanding and appreciation of it to the intelligence and imagination of the reader.

A far deeper-lying and more pervading source of imperfect comprehension of the poem than any difficulty of construction, obscurity of argument, or remoteness of allusion exists in the double meaning that runs through it. The account of the poet's spiritual journey is so vivid and consistent that it has all the reality of an account of an actual experience; but within and beneath runs a stream of allegory not less consistent and hardly less continuous

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than the narrative itself. To the illustration and carrying out of this interior meaning even the minutest details of external incident are often made to contribute, with an appropriateness of significance, and with a freedom from forced interpretation such as no other writer of allegory has succeeded in attaining. The poem may be read with interest as a record of experience with little attention to its inner meaning, but its full interest is only felt when this inner meaning is traced, and the moral significance of the incidents of the story apprehended by the alert intelligence. The allegory is the soul of the poem, — that is, in scholastic phrase, the form of its body, giving to it its special individuality.

Thus in order truly to understand and rightly appreciate the poem the reader must continually seek the inner meaning of its story. "Taken literally," as Dante declares in his Letter to Can Grande, "the subject is the state of the soul after death, simply considered. But allegorically taken, its subject is man, according as by his good or ill deserts he renders himself liable to the reward or punishment of Justice." It is the allegory of human life; and not of human life as an abstraction, but of the individual life; and herein, as Mr. Lowell has said, "lie its profound meaning and its permanent

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force." And herein, too, lie its perennial freshness of interest and the actuality which makes it contemporaneous with every successive generation. The increase of knowledge, the loss of belief in doctrines that were fundamental in Dante's creed, the changes in the order of society, the new thoughts of the world, have not lessened the moral import of the poem, any more than they have lessened its excellence as a work of art. Its real substance is as independent as its artistic beauty, of science, of creed, and of institutions. Human nature does not change from age to age; the motives of action remain the same, though their relative force and the desires and ideals by which they are inspired vary from generation to generation. And thus it is that the moral judgments of a great poet whose imagination penetrates to the core of things, and who, from his very nature as poet, conceives and sets forth the issues of life not in a treatise of abstract morality, but by means of sensible types and images, never lose interest, and have a perpetual contemporaneousness. They deal with the permanent and unalterable elements of the soul of man.

The scene of the poem is the spiritual world, of which we are members even while still denizens in the world of time. In the spiritual world the results of sin or perverted love, and

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of virtue or right love, in this life of probation, are manifest. The life to come is but the fulfilment of the life that now is.

The allegory in which Dante cloaked this truth is of a character that distinguishes the *Divine Comedy* from all other works of similar intent. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, the personages are types of moral qualities or religious dispositions, mere simulacra of men and women. They are abstractions which the genius of Bunyan fails to inform with vitality sufficient to kindle the imagination of the reader with a sense of their actual, living and breathing existence. But in the *Divine Comedy* the personages are all from real life, they are men and women with their natural passions and emotions, and they are undergoing an actual experience. The allegory consists in making their characters and their fates, what all human characters and fates really are, the types and images of spiritual law. Virgil and Beatrice, whose natures as depicted in the poem make nearest approach to purely abstract and typical existence, are always consistently presented as living individuals, exalted indeed in wisdom and power, but with hardly less definite and concrete humanity than that of Dante himself.

The scheme of the created Universe held by the Christians of the Middle Ages was compar-

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atively simple, and so definite that Dante, in accepting it in its main features without modification, was provided with the limited stage requisite for his design, and of which the general disposition was familiar to all his readers. The three spiritual realms had their local bounds marked out as clearly as those of the earth itself. Their cosmography was but an extension of the largely hypothetical geography of the time.

The Earth was supposed to be the centre of the Universe, and its northern hemisphere was the abode of man. At the middle point of this hemisphere stood Jerusalem, equidistant from the Pillars of Hercules on the west, and the Ganges on the east.

Within the body of this hemisphere was Hell, shaped as a vast hollow cone, of which the apex was the centre of the globe; and here, according to Dante, was the seat of Lucifer. The concave of Hell had been formed by his fall, when a portion of the solid earth, through fear of him, ran back to the southern uninhabited hemisphere, and formed there, directly antipodal to Jerusalem, the mountain of Purgatory, which rose a solid cone from the waste of waters that covered this half of the globe, and at its summit was the Terrestrial Paradise.

Immediately surrounding the atmosphere of

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the Earth was the sphere of elemental fire. Around this was the Heaven of the Moon, and encircling this, in succession, were the Heavens of Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jove, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, and the Crystalline or First Moving Heaven. These nine concentric Heavens revolved continually around the Earth, and in proportion to their distance from it was the greater swiftness of each. Encircling all was the Empyrean, increate, incorporeal, motionless, unbounded in time or space, the proper seat of God, the home of the Angels, the abode of the Elect.

The Angelic Hierarchy consisted of nine orders, corresponding to the nine moving Heavens. Their blessedness and the swiftness of the motion with which in unending delight they circled around God were in proportion to their nearness to Him, — first the Seraphs, then in succession the Cherubs, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Princes, Archangels, and Angels. Through them, under the general name of Intelligences, the Divine influence was transmitted to the Heavens, giving to these their circular motion, which was the expression of their longing to be united with the source of their creation. The Heavens in their turn streamed down upon the Earth the Divine influence thus distributed among them,

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in constantly varying proportion and power, producing divers effects in the generation and corruption of material things, and in the dispositions and the lives of men.

Such was the accepted general scheme of the Universe. The intention of God in its creation was to communicate of His perfection to the creatures endowed with souls, that is, to men and to angels, and the proper end of every such creature was to seek its own perfection in likeness to the Divine. This end was attained through that knowledge of God of which the soul was capable, and through love which was in proportion to knowledge. Virtue depended on the free will of man; it was the good use of that will directed to a right object of love. Two lights were given to the soul for guidance of the will: the light of reason for natural things and for the direction of the will to moral virtue; the light of grace for things supernatural, and for the direction of the will to spiritual virtue. Sin was the opposite of virtue, the choice by the will of false objects of love; it involved the misuse of reason and the absence of grace. As the end of virtue was blessedness, so the end of sin was misery.

The corner-stone of Dante's moral system was the Freedom of the Will; in other words, the right of private judgment with the condition

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of accountability. This is the liberty which Dante, that is, man, goes seeking in his journey through the spiritual world. This liberty is to be attained through the right use of reason, illuminated by Divine Grace; it consists in the perfect accord of the will of man with the will of God.

With this view of the nature and end of man Dante's conception of the history of the race could not be other than that its course was providentially ordered. The fall of man had made him a just object of the vengeance of God; but the elect were to be redeemed, and for their redemption the history of the world from the beginning was directed. Not only in His dealings with the Jews, but in His dealings with the heathen was God preparing for the reconciliation to Himself of man, to be finally accomplished in his sacrifice of Himself for them. The Roman Empire was foreordained and established for this end. It was to prepare the way for the establishment of the Roman Church. It was the appointed instrument for the political government of men. Empire and Church were alike divine institutions for the guidance of man on earth.

The aim of Dante in the *Divine Comedy* was to set forth these truths in such wise as to affect the imaginations and touch the hearts of men,

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so that they should turn to righteousness. His conviction of these truths was no mere matter of belief; it had the ardor and certainty of faith. They had appeared to him in all their fulness as a revelation of the Divine wisdom. It was his work as poet, as poet with a Divine commission, to make this revelation known. His work was a work of faith; it was sacred; to it both Heaven and Earth had set their hands.

To this work, as I have said, the definiteness and the limits of the generally accepted theory of the Universe gave the required frame. The very narrowness of this scheme made Dante's design practicable. He had had the experience of a man on earth. He had been lured by false objects of desire from the pursuit of the true good. But Divine Grace, in the form of Beatrice, who had when alive on earth led him aright, now intervened and sent to his aid Virgil, who, as the type of Human Reason, should bring him safe through Hell, showing to him the eternal consequences of sin, and then should conduct him, penitent, up the height of Purgatory, till on its summit, in the Earthly Paradise, Beatrice herself should appear once more to him. Thence she, as the type of that knowledge from which comes the love of the Divine Being, should lead him through the Heavens up to the Empyrean, to the consummation of his course in the actual vision of God.

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DANTE ALIGHIERI
(DURANTE DI ALIGHIERO DEGLI ALIGHIERI)
THE DIVINE COMEDY
BOOK I
INFERNO (HELL)

CANTO I

MIDWAY in the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost. Ah, how hard it is to tell what that wood was, wild, rugged, harsh; the very thought of it renews the fear! It is so bitter that death is hardly more so. But, to treat of the good that I found in it, I will tell of the other things I saw there.

I cannot rightly say how I entered it, I was so full of sleep at the moment I left the true way; but when I had reached the foot of a hill, there at the end of the valley that had pierced my heart with fear, I looked up and saw its shoulders already clad in the rays of the planet that leads men aright by every path.

Then the fear was somewhat quieted that had continued in the lake of my heart through the night I had passed so piteously. And as he who with laboring breath has escaped from the deep to the shore turns to look back on the dangerous waters, so my mind which was still fleeing turned back to gaze upon the pass that never left anyone alive.

After I had rested my tired body a little, I again took up my way across the desert strand, so that the firm foot was always the lower. And behold, near the beginning of the steep, a leopard light-footed and very fleet, covered with a spotted hide! And it did not depart from before my eyes, but did so impede my way that more than once I turned round to go back.

It was the beginning of the morning, and the sun was mounting with the stars that were with it when Divine Love first set those beautiful things in motion, so that the hour of the day and the sweet season gave me cause for good hope of that beast with the gay skin; yet not so much that I did not feel afraid at the sight of a lion that appeared to me and seemed to be coming at me, head high and raging with hunger, so that the air seemed to tremble at it;

and a she-wolf, that in her leanness seemed laden with every craving and had already caused many to live in sorrow: she put such heaviness upon me with the fear that came from sight of her that I lost hope of the height. And like one who is eager in winning, but, when the time comes that makes him lose, weeps and is saddened in all his thoughts, such did that peaceless beast make me, as, coming on against me, she pushed me back, little by little, to where the sun is silent.

While I was ruining down to the depth there appeared before me one who seemed faint through long silence. When I saw him in that vast desert, I cried to him, "Have pity on me whatever you are, shade or living man!"

"No, not a living man, though once I was," he answered me, "and my parents were Lombards, both Mantuans by birth. I was born *sub Julio*, although late, and I lived at Rome under the good Augustus, in the time of the false and lying gods. I was a poet, and I sang of that just son of Anchises who came from Troy after proud Ilium was burned. But you, why do you return to so much woe? Why do you not climb the delectable mountain, the source and cause of every happiness?"

"Are you, then, that Virgil, that fount which pours forth so broad a stream of speech?" I answered him, my brow covered with shame. "O glory and light of other poets, may the long study and the great love that have made me search your volume avail me! You are my master and my author. You alone are he from whom I took the fair style that has done me honor. See the beast that has turned me back. Help me against her, famous sage, for she makes my veins and pulses tremble."

"It behooves you to go by another way if you would escape from this wild place," he answered when he saw me weep, "for this beast, the cause of your complaint, lets no man pass her way, but so besets him that she slays him; and she has a nature so vicious and malign that she never sates her greedy appetite and after feeding is hungrier than before. Many are the beasts with which she mates, and there will yet be more, until the Hound shall come who will deal her a painful death. He will not feed on earth or pelf, but on wisdom, love, and virtue, and his birth shall be between felt and felt. He shall be the salvation of that low-lying Italy for which the virgin Camilla and Euryalus, Turnus, and Nisus died of their wounds.

He shall hunt her through every town till he has thrust her back into Hell, whence envy first sent her forth. Therefore I think and deem it best that you should follow me, and I will be your guide and lead you hence through an eternal place, where you shall hear the despairing shrieks and see the ancient tormented spirits who all bewail the second death. Then you shall see those who are content in the fire because they hope to come among the blessed, whensoever that may be; and to these if you would then ascend, there shall be a soul worthier than I to guide you; with her I shall leave you at my departing. For the Emperor who reigns thereabove wills not that I come into His city, because I was rebellious to His law. In all parts is His empire, in that part is His kingdom, there is His city and His lofty seat. Oh, happy he whom He elects thereto!"

And I to him, "Poet, I beseech you, by that God whom you did not know, so that I may escape this ill and worse, lead me whither you said just now, that I may see St. Peter's gate and those whom you term so woeful."

Then he set out, and I followed after him.

CANTO II

DAY was departing, and the dark air was taking the creatures on earth from their labors; and I alone was making ready to sustain the strife, both of the journey and of the pity, which unerring memory shall retrace. O Muses, O high genius, help me now! O memory that wrote down what I saw, here shall your worthiness appear!

I began, "Poet, you who guide me, consider if my strength is sufficient, before you trust me to the deep way. You tell how the father of Silvius went, while still mortal, to the immortal world and was there in his bodily senses. But that the Adversary of all evil should show him such favor seems not unfitting to an understanding mind, considering the high effect that was to spring from him, and who and what he was;

for in the Empyrean heaven he was chosen as father of glorious Rome and of her empire, and both, to say the truth, were established as the holy place where the successor of great Peter has his seat. In this journey, which you affirm he made, he learned things that were the cause of his victory and of the papal mantle. Later, the Chosen Vessel went there, that he might bring thence confirmation of that faith which is the beginning of the way of salvation. But I, why do I come there? And who allows it? I am not Aeneas, I am not Paul; of this neither I nor others think me worthy. Wherefore, if I yield and come, I fear that the coming may be folly. You are wise; you understand better than I explain it." And like one who unwills what he has willed and with new thoughts changes his resolve, so that he quite gives up the thing he had begun, such did I become on that dark slope, for by thinking on it I rendered null the undertaking that had been so suddenly embarked upon.

"If I have well understood what you say," the shade of that magnanimous one replied, "your spirit is beset by cowardice, which oftentimes encumbers a man, turning him from honorable endeavor, as false seeing turns a beast that shies.

To free you from this fear I will tell you why I came and what it was I heard when I first felt pity for you. I was among those who are suspended, and a lady called me, so blessed and so fair that I prayed her to command me. Her eyes were more resplendent than the stars, and she began to say to me, sweetly and softly, in an angelic voice, 'O courteous Mantuan spirit, whose fame still lasts in the world, and shall last as long as the world, my friend —and not the friend of Fortune—finds his way so impeded on the desert slope that he has turned back in fright; and, from what I have heard of him in Heaven, I fear he may already have gone so astray that I am late in arising to help him. Go now, and with your fair speech and with whatever is needful for his deliverance, assist him so that it may console me. I am Beatrice who send you. I come from a place to which I long to return. Love moved me and makes me speak. When I am before my Lord I will often praise you to Him.'

"Then she was silent; and I began, 'O Lady of virtue, through whom alone mankind rises beyond all that is contained by the heaven that circles least,

your command so pleases me, that had I obeyed already it would be late. You have only to declare your will to me. But tell me the reason why you are not wary of descending to this center from that spacious region to which you long to return.'

"'Since you wish to know so deeply,' she answered me, 'I will tell you briefly why I am not afraid to come within this place. Those things alone should be feared that have power to do one harm—not other things, for they are not fearful. I am made such by God, of His grace, that your suffering does not touch me, and no flame of this burning assails me. In Heaven there is a gracious lady who has such pity of this impediment to which I send you that stern judgment is broken thereabove. She called Lucy, in her request, and said, "Your faithful one has need of you now, and I commend him to you." Lucy, foe of every cruelty, arose and, coming to where I sat with ancient Rachel, said, "Beatrice, true praise of God, why do you not succor him who bore you such love that for you he left the vulgar throng? Do you not hear his pitiful lament? Do you not see the death that assails him on that flood over which the sea has no vaunt?"

" 'On earth no one was ever so swift to seize advantage or to flee from harm as I was when these words were uttered, to come down here from my blessed seat—trusting in your noble speech, which honors you and all who have heard it.'

"When she had said this to me, she turned her eyes, which shone with tears, making me the more eager to come; and so, even as she wished, I came to you, and rescued you from the beast that was preventing your going the short way up the fair mountain. What, then, is this? Why, why do you hold back? Why do you harbor such cowardice in your heart? Why are you not bold and free, when in Heaven's court three such blessed ladies are mindful of you, and my words pledge you so great a good?"

As little flowers, bent down and closed by chill of night, straighten and all unfold upon their stems when the sun brightens them, such in my faint strength did I become; and so much good courage rushed to my heart that I began, as one set free, "Oh, how compassionate was she who helped me, and how courteous were you, so quick to obey the true words she spoke to you! By your words you have made me so eager to come with you that I have returned to my first resolve.

Now on, for a single will is in us both; you are my leader, you my master and my teacher."

So I said to him, and when he moved on, I entered along the deep and savage way.

CANTO III

THROUGH ME YOU ENTER THE WOEFUL CITY,
THROUGH ME YOU ENTER ETERNAL GRIEF,
THROUGH ME YOU ENTER AMONG THE LOST.
JUSTICE MOVED MY HIGH MAKER:
THE DIVINE POWER MADE ME,
THE SUPREME WISDOM, AND THE PRIMAL LOVE.
BEFORE ME NOTHING WAS CREATED
IF NOT ETERNAL, AND ETERNAL I ENDURE.
ABANDON EVERY HOPE, YOU WHO ENTER.

These words of obscure color I saw inscribed over a portal; whereupon I said, "Master, their meaning is hard for me." And he to me, as one who understands, "Here must all fear be left behind; here let all cowardice be dead. We have come to the place where I have told you you will see the wretched people who have lost the good of intellect." And when he had placed his hand on mine, with a cheerful look from which I took comfort, he led me among the secret things.

Here sighs, laments, and loud wailings were resounding through the starless air, so that at first they made me weep. Strange tongues, horrible outcries, utterances of woe, accents of anger, voices shrill and faint, and the beating of hands among them, were making a tumult that swirls unceasingly in that dark and timeless air, like sand when a whirlwind blows. And I, my head circled with error, said, "Master, what is this I hear? And what people are these who seem so overcome by pain?"

And he to me, "Such is the miserable condition of the sorry souls of those who lived without infamy and without praise. They are mingled with that base band of angels who were neither rebellious nor faithful to God, but stood apart. The heavens drive them out, so as not to be less beautiful; and deep Hell does not receive them, lest the wicked have some glory over them."

And I, "Master, what is so grievous to them that it makes them lament so bitterly?"

He answered, "Very briefly I will tell you. These have no hope of death, and their blind life is so abject that they are envious of every other lot. The world does not suffer that report of them shall live. Mercy and justice disdain them. Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass on."

Looking again, I saw a banner that ran so fast, whirling about, that it seemed it might never have rest, and behind it came so long a train of people that I should never have believed death had undone so many. After I had recognized some among them, I saw and knew the shade of him who from cowardice made the great refusal. Straightway I understood and knew for certain that this was the sorry sect of those who are displeasing to God and to his enemies. These wretches, who never were alive, were naked and were much stung by gadflies and wasps there, which were streaking their faces with blood that mingled with their tears and was gathered by loathsome worms at their feet.

Then, directing my gaze farther on, I saw people at the shore of a great river; wherefore I said, "Master, now grant that I may know who these are, and what law makes them seem so ready to cross over, as I discern through the dim light."

And he to me, "These things will be made known to you when we stay our steps at the dismal stream of Acheron."

Then, with eyes downcast and ashamed, fearing that my words had displeased him, I refrained from speaking till we reached the river.

And behold, an old man, his hair white with age, coming towards us in a boat and shouting, "Woe to you, wicked souls! Do not hope to see Heaven ever! I come to carry you to the other shore, into eternal darkness, into fire and cold. And you there, living soul, stand aside from these that are dead." But when he saw that I did not do so, he said, "By another way, by other ports, not here, you shall cross to shore. A lighter bark must carry you."

And my leader to him, "Charon, do not rage. Thus is it willed there where that can be done which is willed; and ask no more."

Thereon the grizzled cheeks of the ferryman of the livid marsh, who had wheels of flame about his eyes, were quiet. But those forlorn and naked souls changed color, their teeth chattering, as soon as they heard the cruel words. They cursed God, their parents, the human race, the place, the time, the seed of their begetting and of their birth. Then, weeping loudly, all drew to the evil shore that awaits every man who fears not God. The demon Charon, his eyes like glowing coals, beckons to them and collects them all, beating with his oar whoever lingers.

As the leaves fall away in autumn, one after another, till the bough sees all its spoils upon the ground, so there the evil seed of Adam: one by one they cast themselves from that shore at signals, like a bird at its call. Thus they go over the dark water, and before they have landed on the other shore, on this side a new throng gathers.

"My son," said the courteous master, "those who die in the wrath of God all come together here from every land; and they are eager to cross the stream, for Divine Justice so spurs them that their fear is changed to desire. No good soul ever passes this way; therefore, if Charon complains of you, you can now well understand the meaning of his words."

When he had ended, the gloomy plain shook so violently that even now the memory of my terror bathes me in sweat. The tear-soaked ground gave forth a wind that flashed a crimson light which overcame all my senses, and I fell like one who is seized by sleep.

CANTO IV

A HEAVY thunderclap broke the deep sleep in my head, so that I started like one who is awakened by force; and, standing up, I moved my rested eyes around, gazing intently to make out the place where I was. True it is that I found myself on the brink of the chasm of pain, which holds the clamor of endless wailings. It was so dark and deep and misty that, though I peered intently down into the depth, I could make out nothing there.

"Let us descend now into the blind world here below," the poet began, all pale. "I will be first, and you second."

And I, noting his pallor, said, "How shall I come, if you are afraid, who are wont to encourage me when I hesitate?"

And he to me, "The anguish of the people here below paints my face with the pity that you take for fear. Let us go, for the long way urges us." So he entered, and had me enter, the first circle that girds the abyss.

Here there was no plaint, that could be heard, except of sighs, which caused the eternal air to tremble; and this arose from the sadness, without torments, of the crowds that were many and great, both of children and of women and men.

The good master said to me, "Do you not ask what spirits are these that you see? Now, before you go farther, I will have you know that they did not sin; but if they have merit, that does not suffice, for they did not have baptism, which is the portal of the faith you hold; and if they were before Christianity, they did not worship God aright, and I myself am one of these. Because of these shortcomings, and for no other fault, we are lost, and only so far afflicted that without hope we live in longing."

Great sadness seized my heart when I heard him, for I recognized that people of great worth were suspended in that Limbo.

"Tell me, master, tell me, sir," I began, wishing to be assured of the faith that conquers every error,

"did ever anyone go forth from here, either by his own or by another's merit, who afterwards was blessed?"

And he, who understood my covert speech, replied, "I was new in this condition when I saw a Mighty One come here, crowned with sign of victory. He took hence the shade of our first parent, Abel his son, and Noah, and Moses, obedient giver of laws, Abraham the patriarch and David the king, Israel with his father and his children and with Rachel, for whom he did so much, and many others; and He made them blessed. And I would have you know that before these no human souls were saved."

We did not cease going on because he spoke, but all the while were passing through the wood, I mean the wood of thronging spirits; nor had we yet gone far from the place of my slumber when I saw a fire, which overcame a hemisphere of darkness. We were still a little distant from it, yet not so far but that I might in part discern that honorable folk possessed this place.

"O you who honor science and art, who are these that have such honor that it sets them apart from the condition of the rest?"

And he to me, "Their honored fame, which resounds in your life above, wins grace in Heaven, which thus advances them."

Meanwhile I heard a voice which said, "Honor the great Poet! His shade, which had departed, now returns."

After the voice had ceased and was still, I saw four great shades coming to us, in semblance neither sad nor joyful. The good master began, "Note him there with sword in hand who comes before the other three as their lord. He is Homer, sovereign poet; next is Horace, satirist; Ovid comes third, and Lucan last. Since each shares with me the name the single voice has uttered, they do me honor, and in that they do well."

Thus I saw assembled the fair school of that lord of highest song who, like an eagle, soars above the rest. After they had talked awhile together, they turned to me with sign of salutation, at which my master smiled; and far more honor still they showed me, for they made me one of their company, so that I was sixth amid so much wisdom. Thus we went onward to the light, talking of things it is well to pass in silence, even as it was well to speak of them there.

We came to the foot of a noble castle, seven times encircled by lofty walls and defended round about by a fair stream.

This we crossed, as on solid ground, and through seven gates I entered with these sages. We came to a meadow of fresh verdure, where there were people with grave and slow-moving eyes and looks of great authority; they spoke seldom and with gentle voices.

Then we drew to one side, into an open place which was luminous and high, so that we could see all of them. There before me, on the enameled green, the great spirits were shown to me, so that I glory within me for having seen them. I saw Electra with many companions, among whom I knew Hector, and Aeneas, and falcon-eyed Caesar armed. I saw Camilla and Penthesilea; and on the other side I saw King Latinus, who sat with his daughter Lavinia. I saw that Brutus who drove out the Tarquin, I saw Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia; and by himself apart I saw Balian of Ibelin.

When I raised my eyes a little higher, I saw the Master of those who know, seated in a philosophic family. All look to him, all do him honor. There, nearest to him and in front of the rest, I saw Socrates and Plato; I saw Democritus, who ascribes the world to chance, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Zeno.

I saw the good collector of the qualities of things—I mean Dioscorides—and I saw Orpheus, Tully, Linus, and Seneca the moralist, Euclid the geometer, and Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Maimonides, Galen, and Abraham bar Hiyya who made the great commentary. I cannot give full account of them all, for my long theme so drives me on, that many times the telling comes short of the fact.

The company of six diminishes to two; by another way my wise guide leads me, out of the quiet, into the trembling air; and I come to a part where there is naught that shines.

CANTO V

THUS I descended from the first circle into the second, which girds less space, and so much greater woe that it goads to wailing. There stands Minos, horrible and snarling: upon the entrance he examines their offenses, and judges and dispatches them according as he entwines. I mean that when the ill-begotten soul comes before him, it confesses all; and that discerner of sins sees which shall be its place in Hell, then girds himself with his tail as many times as the grades he wills that it be sent down. Always before him stands a crowd of them; they go, each in his turn, to the judgment; they tell, and hear, and then are hurled below.

"O you who come to the abode of pain," said Minos to me, when he saw me, pausing in the act of that great office,

"beware how you enter and in whom you trust; let not the breadth of the entrance deceive you!" And my leader to him, "Why do you too cry out? Do not hinder his fated going: thus is it willed there where that can be done which is willed; and ask no more."

Now the doleful notes begin to reach me; now I am come where much wailing smites me. I came into a place mute of all light, which bellows like the sea in tempest when it is assailed by warring winds. The hellish hurricane, never resting, sweeps along the spirits with its rapine; whirling and smiting, it torments them. When they arrive before the ruin, there the shrieks, the moans, the lamentations; there they curse the divine power. I learned that to such torment are condemned the carnal sinners, who subject reason to desire.

And as their wings bear the starlings along in the cold season, in wide, dense flocks, so does that blast the sinful spirits; hither, thither, downward, upward, it drives them. No hope of less pain, not to say of rest, ever comforts them. And as the cranes go chanting their lays, making a long line of themselves in the air, so I saw shades come, uttering wails,

borne by that strife; wherefore I said, "Master, who are these people that are so lashed by the black air?"

"The first of these of whom you wish to know," he said to me then, "was empress of many tongues. She was so given to lechery that she made lust licit in her law, to take away the blame she had incurred. She is Semiramis, of whom we read that she succeeded Ninus and had been his wife: she held the land the Sultan rules. The next is she who slew herself for love and broke faith to the ashes of Sichaeus; next is wanton Cleopatra. See Helen, for whom so many years of ill revolved; and see the great Achilles, who fought at the last with love. See Paris, Tristan," and more than a thousand shades whom love had parted from our life he showed me, pointing them out and naming them.

When I heard my teacher name the ladies and the knights of old, pity overcame me and I was as one bewildered. "Poet," I began, "willingly would I speak with those two that go together and seem to be so light upon the wind."

And he to me, "You shall see when they are nearer to us; and do you entreat them then by that love which leads them, and they will come."

As soon as the wind bends them to us, I raised my voice, "O wearied souls! come speak with us, if Another forbid it not."

As doves called by desire, with wings raised and steady, come through the air, borne by their will to their sweet nest, so did these issue from the troop where Dido is, coming to us through the malignant air, such force had my compassionate cry.

"O living creature, gracious and benign, that go through the black air visiting us who stained the world with blood, if the King of the universe were friendly to us, we would pray Him for your peace, since you have pity on our perverse ill. Of that which it pleases you to hear and to speak, we will hear and speak with you, while the wind, as now, is silent for us.

"The city where I was born lies on that shore where the Po descends to be at peace with its followers. Love, which is quickly kindled in a gentle heart, seized this one for the fair form that was taken from me—and the way of it afflicts me still. Love, which absolves no loved one from loving, seized me so strongly with delight in him, that, as you see, it does not leave me even now. Love brought us to one death. Caina awaits him who quenched our life."

These words were borne to us from them.

And when I heard those afflicted souls I bowed my head and held it bowed until the poet said to me, "What are you thinking of?"

When I answered, I began, "Alas! How many sweet thoughts, what great desire, brought them to the woeful pass!"

Then I turned again to them, and I began, "Francesca, your torments make me weep for grief and pity; but tell me, in the time of the sweet sighs, by what and how did Love grant you to know the dubious desires?"

And she to me, "There is no greater sorrow than to recall, in wretchedness, the happy time; and this your teacher knows. But if you have such great desire to know the first root of our love, I will tell as one who weeps and tells. One day, for pastime, we read of Lancelot, how love constrained him; we were alone, suspecting nothing. Several times that reading urged our eyes to meet and took the color from our faces, but one moment alone it was that overcame us. When we read how the longed-for smile was kissed by so great a lover, this one, who never shall be parted from me, kissed my mouth all trembling. A Gallehault was the book and he who wrote it; that day we read no farther in it."

While the one spirit said this, the other wept, so that for pity I swooned, as if in death, and fell as a dead body falls.

CANTO VI

At the return of my mind which had closed itself before the piteousness of the two kinsfolk that had quite overwhelmed me with sadness, I see about me new torments and new tormented souls, whichever way I move and turn about to gaze. I am in the third circle of the eternal, accursed, cold and heavy rain: its measure and its quality are never new; huge hail, foul water, and snow pour down through the murky air; the ground that receives it stinks. Cerberus, monstrous beast and cruel, with three throats barks dog-like over the people who are here submerged. His eyes are red, his beard greasy and black, his belly wide and his hands taloned; he claws the spirits, flays and quarters them.

The rain makes them howl like dogs; the profane wretches often turn themselves, making of one side a screen for the other.

When Cerberus the great worm perceived us, he opened his mouths and showed his fangs; he was aquiver in every limb. And my leader, reaching out his open hands, took up earth, and with full fists threw it into the ravenous gullets. As the dog that barking craves, and then grows quiet when he snaps up his food, straining and struggling only to devour it, such became the foul faces of the demon Cerberus, who so thunders on the souls that they would fain be deaf.

We were passing over the shades whom the heavy rain subdues, and we were setting our feet upon their emptiness, which seems real bodies. All were lying on the ground, save one, who sat up as soon as he saw us pass before him.

"O you that are led through this Hell," he said to me, "recognize me if you can: you were made before I was unmade."

And I to him, "The anguish you endure perhaps takes you from my memory, so that I do not seem ever to have seen you; but tell me who you are, who are set in a place so grievous and who suffer such punishment that, if any is greater, none is so loathsome."

And he to me, "Your city, which is so full of envy that already the sack runs over, held me in it, in the bright life. You citizens called me Ciacco: for the ruinous fault of gluttony, as you see, I am broken by the rain; and I, in my misery, am not alone, for all these endure the same penalty for the same fault." And he said no more.

I answered him, "Ciacco, your misery so weighs upon me that it bids me weep. But tell me, if you can, what the citizens of the divided city will come to; and if any one in it is just; and tell me why such discord has assailed it."

And he to me, "After long contention they will come to blood, and the rustic party will drive out the other with much offense. Then, through the power of one who presently is temporizing, that party is destined to fall within three years, and the other to prevail, long holding its head high and keeping the other under heavy burdens, however it may lament and feel the shame. Two men are just, and are not heeded there. Pride, envy, and avarice are the three sparks that have inflamed their hearts." Here he ended his grievous words.

And I to him, "I would have you instruct me further, and make me a gift of further speech:

Farinata and Tegghiaio, who were so worthy, Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, and Mosca, and the others who set their minds on doing good, tell me where they are and give me to know them, for great desire urges me to learn whether Heaven soothes or Hell envenoms them."

And he, "They are among the blackest souls, and different faults weigh them down toward the bottom; if you descend that far, there you can see them. But when you shall be in the sweet world I pray you recall me to men's memory. More I do not tell you, nor do I answer you more." Thereon he twisted his straight eyes asquint, looked at me for a moment, then bent his head and fell down with the other blind ones.

And my leader said to me, "He wakes no more until the angel's trumpet sounds and the hostile Power comes, when each shall find again his dismal tomb and take again his flesh and form, and hear that which resounds to all eternity."

Thus with slow steps we passed along through the foul mixture of the shades and of the rain, touching a little on the future life; wherefore I said, "Master, these torments, will they increase after the great Judgment, or will they grow less, or will they be just as burning as now?"

And he to me, "Return to your science, which has it that the more a thing is perfect, the more it feels the good, and so the pain. Although this accursed folk can never come to true perfection, yet they look to be nearer it then than now."

We went round along that road, speaking much more than I repeat, and we came to the place where the descent is; there we found Plutus, the great enemy.

CANTO VII

"*Pape Satàn, pape Satàn aleppe!*" Plutus began with a clucking voice; and that gentle sage who knew all, said, to reassure me, "Do not let your fear harm you; for, whatever power he have, he shall not keep us from descending this rock." Then he turned back to that bloated visage and said, "Silence, accursed wolf! Consume yourself inwardly with your own rage. Not without cause is this journey to the depth; so is it willed on high, there where Michael avenged the proud rebellion." As sails swollen by the wind fall in a heap when the mainmast snaps, so fell that cruel beast to the ground.

Thus we descended into the fourth hollow, taking in more of the dismal bank which insacks all the evil of the universe.

Ah, justice of God! who crams together so many new travails and penalties as I saw? And why does our guilt so waste us? As does the wave, there over Charybdis, breaking itself against the wave it meets, so must the folk here dance their round. Here I saw far more people than elsewhere, both on the one side and on the other, howling loudly, rolling weights, which they pushed with their chests; they clashed together, and then right there each wheeled round, rolling back his weight, shouting, "Why do you hoard?" and "Why do you squander?" Thus they returned along the gloomy circle on either hand to the opposite point, shouting at each other again their reproachful refrain; then, having reached that point, each turned back through his half-circle to the next joust.

And I, heart-wrung at this, said, "Master, now declare to me who are these people, and if all these tonsured ones on our left were clerics."

And he to me, "Each and all of these were so asquint of mind in the first life that they followed there no right measure in their spending; most clearly do they bark this out when they come to the two points of the circle where opposite fault divides them. These who have no covering of hair on their head were clerics, and popes and cardinals, in whom avarice wreaks its excess."

And I said, "Master, among such as these I ought surely to recognize some who were polluted with these evils." And he to me, "You harbor a vain thought: the undiscerning life that made them foul now makes them dim to all discernment. They will come forever to the two buttings; these will rise from the grave with closed fist, and these with cropped hair. Ill-giving and ill-keeping have robbed them of the fair world and set them to this scuffle—what that is, I spend no fair words to say. Now can you see, my son, the brief mockery of the goods that are committed to Fortune, for which humankind contend with one another; because all the gold that is beneath the moon, or ever was, would not give rest to a single one of these weary souls."

"Master," I said, "now tell me further: this Fortune which you touch on here, what is it, which has the goods of the world so in its clutches?"

And he to me, "O foolish creatures, how great is the ignorance that besets you! I would have you receive my judgment on this now. He whose wisdom transcends all, made the heavens and gave them guides, so that every part shines to every part, equally distributing the light. In like manner, for worldly splendors He ordained a general minister and guide

who should in due time transfer the vain goods from race to race, and from one to another blood, beyond the prevention of human wit, so that one race rules and another languishes, pursuant to her judgment, which is hidden like the snake in the grass. Your wisdom cannot withstand her: she foresees, judges, and pursues her reign, as theirs the other gods. Her changes know no truce. Necessity compels her to be swift, so fast do men come to their turns. This is she who is much reviled even by those who ought to praise her, but do wrongfully blame her and defame her. But she is blest and does not hear it. Happy with the other primal creatures she turns her sphere and rejoices in her bliss.

"Now let us descend to greater wretchedness: already every star sinks that was rising when I set out, and to stay overlong is forbidden."

We crossed the circle to the other edge, above a fount that boils and pours over by a trench leading from it. The water was far darker than perse; and we, in company with the murky waves, entered down through a strange way. This dismal little stream, when it has descended to the foot of the malign gray slopes, flows into the marsh that is named Styx;

and I, who was standing intent to gaze, saw a muddy people in that bog, all naked and with looks of rage. They were smiting each other not with hand only, but with head and chest and feet, and tearing each other piecemeal with their teeth.

The good master said, "Son, you see now the souls of those whom anger overcame; and I would also have you know for certain that down under the water are people who sigh and make it bubble at the surface, as your eye tells you wherever it turns. Fixed in the slime they say, 'We were sullen in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun, bearing within us the sluggish fumes; now we are sullen in the black mire.' This hymn they gurgle in their throats, for they cannot speak it in full words."

Thus we compassed a great arc of that foul pond between the dry bank and the slough, with eyes turned on those that swallow the mire; and we came at length to the foot of a tower.

CANTO VIII

I SAY, continuing, that long before we had come to the foot of the high tower, our eyes went upward to its summit because of two little flames we saw set there, while yet another returned the signal from so far off that the eye could hardly catch it. And I turned to the sea of all wisdom and said, "This one, what does it mean? And that other fire, what does it answer? And who are they that have made it?" And he to me, "Over the foul waves you can already make out what is expected, if the fumes of the marsh do not hide it from you."

Bowstring never drove arrow from itself that coursed so swiftly through the air as a little bark I saw come towards us then through the water, piloted by a single boatman, who cried, "Now you are caught, fell spirit!"

"Phlegyas, Phlegyas, this time you shout in vain," said my lord. "You shall not have us longer than while crossing the mire." As one who listens to some great deception that has been practiced on him, and then repines at it, such Phlegyas became in his gathered wrath.

My leader got into the bark, then had me enter after him—and only when I was in it did it seem laden.

As soon as he and I had embarked, the ancient prow moves off, cutting more of the water than it is wont with others. While we were running through the dead channel, there rose before me one covered with mud, and said, "Who are you that come before your time?"

And I to him, "If I come, I do not remain. But you, who are you that have become so foul?"

He answered, "You see that I am one who weeps."

And I to him, "In weeping and in sorrow do you remain, accursed spirit, for I know you, even if you are all filthy."

Then he stretched both his hands to the boat, whereat the wary master thrust him off, saying, "Away there with the other dogs!" Then he put his arms about my neck, kissed my face, and said, "Indignant soul, blessed is she who bore you! He was an arrogant one in the world. No goodness whatever adorns his memory; so is his shade furious here.

How many up there now account themselves great kings, that here shall lie like swine in mire, leaving behind them horrible dispraises."

And I, "Master, I should like well to see him soused in this soup, before we quit the lake."

And he to me, "Before the shore comes into view you shall be satisfied. It is fitting that in such a wish you should be gratified."

A little after this I saw such rending of him by the muddy folk that I still praise and thank God for it. All cried, "At Filippo Argenti!"—and the irascible Florentine spirit turned on himself with his teeth.

Here we left him, and I tell no more of him; but on my ears smote a sound of wailing, at which I bend my eyes intently forward. The good master said, "Now, my son, the city that is named Dis draws near, with its grave citizens, with its great garrison."

And I, "Master, already I distinctly discern its mosques there within the valley, red as if they had come out of the fire."

And he to me, "The eternal fire that blazes there within makes them show red, as you see, in this nether Hell."

We came at last into the deep moats entrenching that doleful city. The walls seemed to me to be of iron,

and not until we had made a great circuit did we come to a place where the boatman loudly cried, "Out with you here! This is the entrance."

Above the gates I saw more than a thousand of those rained down from Heaven, who cried angrily, "Who is this that without death goes through the kingdom of the dead?" And my wise master made a sign that he wished to speak with them apart. Then they restrained somewhat their great disdain, and said, "You come alone, and let that one depart, who has entered so daringly into this kingdom. Let him retrace alone his foolish way; try, if he can!—for you shall stay here, who have escorted him through so dark a country."

Judge, reader, if I did not lose heart at the sound of the accursed words, for I did not think I should ever return here.

"O my dear leader, who seven times and more have restored my confidence and drawn me from great peril confronting me, do not leave me thus undone," I said. "And if going farther is denied us, let us quickly retrace our steps together."

And that lord who had led me thither said to me, "Do not fear, for no one can take from us our passage, by such a One is it granted us; but wait for me here, and comfort your weary spirit and feed it with good hope, for I will not forsake you in the nether world."

So he goes away and leaves me there, the gentle father, and I remain in doubt, as yes and no contend within my head.

I could not hear what he proposed to them; but he was not long there with them when they all scrambled to get back in. These our adversaries shut the gates in the face of my lord, who remained without and turned back to me with slow steps. He had his eyes upon the ground, and his brows were shorn of all boldness, and he was saying with sighs, "Who has denied me the abodes of pain?" And to me he said, "Be not dismayed because of my vexation, for I shall prevail in this, whatever be contrived within to hinder us. This insolence of theirs is nothing new, for they showed it once at a less secret gate, which still stands without a bolt. Over it you saw the dead inscription; and already, on this side of it, there comes down the steep, passing the circles without escort, one by whom the city shall be opened to us."

CANTO IX

THAT color which cowardice painted outwardly on me when I saw my leader turn back, repressed more speedily his own new color. He stopped attentive, like a man that listens, for his eye could not lead him far through the dark air and the dense fog.

"Yet we must win this fight," he began, "or else . . . such did she offer herself to us! Oh, how long to me it seems till someone come!" I saw well how he covered up the beginning with the rest that came after, which were words different from the first; but none the less his speech gave me fear, because I drew his broken phrase perhaps to a worse meaning than it held.

"Into this depth of the dismal hollow does any ever descend from the first circle where the sole punishment is hope cut off?" I asked;

and he answered, "It seldom happens that any of us makes the journey on which I go. It is true that once before I was down here, conjured by that cruel Erichtho who was wont to call back shades into their bodies. My flesh had been but short while divested of me, when she made me enter within that wall to draw forth a spirit from the circle of Judas. That is the lowest place, and the darkest, and farthest from the heaven that encircles all. Well do I know the way, so reassure yourself. This marsh, which exhales the mighty stench, girds round the sorrowful city, wherein now we cannot enter without anger."

And more he said, but I have it not in memory, for my eye had wholly drawn me to the high tower with the glowing summit, where all at once three hellish blood-stained Furies had instantly risen up. They had the limbs and bearing of women, and they were girt with greenest hydras. For hair they had little serpents and cerastes bound about their savage temples. And he, who well recognized the handmaids of the queen of eternal lamentation, said to me, "See the fierce Erinyes! That is Megaera on the left; she that wails on the right is Alecto; Tisiphone is in the middle"; and with that he was silent.

Each was tearing her breast with her nails; and they were beating themselves with their hands, and crying out so loudly that in fear I pressed close to the poet.

"Let Medusa come and we'll turn him to stone," they all cried, looking downward. "Poorly did we avenge the assault of Theseus."

"Turn your back, and keep your eyes shut; for should the Gorgon show herself and you see her, there would be no returning above." Thus said the master, and he himself turned me round and, not trusting to my hands, covered my face with his own hands as well.

O you who have sound understanding, mark the doctrine that is hidden under the veil of the strange verses!

And now there came over the turbid waves a crash of fearful sound, at which both shores trembled: a sound as of a wind, violent from conflicting heats, which strikes the forest and with unchecked course shatters the branches, beats them down and sweeps them away, haughtily driving onward in its cloud of dust and putting wild beasts and shepherds to flight.

He loosed my eyes, and said, "Now direct your sight across that ancient scum, there where that fume is harshest."

As the frogs before their enemy the snake all vanish through the water, till each cocks itself on the bottom,

I saw more than a thousand ruined souls flee before one that strode dry-shod over Styx. He was clearing that gross air from before his face, often moving his left hand before him, and only with that annoyance did he seem weary. Well did I perceive that he was a messenger from Heaven; and I turned to the master, who signed to me that I should stand quiet and bow down to him. Ah, how full of disdain he seemed to me! He came to the gate, and with a little wand he opened it, and there was no resistance.

"O outcasts from Heaven, race despised," he began upon the horrible threshold, "why is this insolence harbored in you? Why do you kick against that Will which can never be thwarted of its end, and which many times has increased your pain? What does it avail to butt against the fates? Your Cerberus, if you well remember, still bears his chin and his throat peeled for doing so." Then he turned back on the filthy way, and spoke not a word to us, but looked like one whom other care urges and incites than that of those who stand before him.

Then we moved our steps toward the city, secure after the holy words. We entered it without any strife; and I, who was eager to behold the condition which such a fortress encloses,

cast my eye round about, as soon as I was in; and on every hand I see a great plain full of woe and of cruel torment. As at Arles, where the Rhone slackens its course, and as at Pola, near the Quarnero, which shuts Italy in and bathes her borders, the sepulchers make all the place uneven, so they did here on every side, save that the manner here was more bitter; for among the tombs flames were scattered, whereby they were made to glow all over, hotter than iron need be for any craft. Their covers were all raised up, and such dire laments were issuing forth from them as truly seemed to come from people wretched and suffering.

And I, "Master, what are these people who, buried within these chests, make themselves heard by their woeful sighs?"

And he to me, "Here are the heresiarchs with their followers of every sect, and the tombs are laden far more than you think. Like with like is buried here, and the monuments are more and less hot."

Then, after he had turned to the right hand, we passed between the tortures and the high battlements.

CANTO X

Now, along a solitary path between the wall of the city and the torments my master goes on, and I follow after him.

"O supreme virtue," I began, "who lead me round as you will through the impious circles, speak to me and satisfy my desires. Might these people who lie within the sepulchers be seen? Indeed, the covers are all raised, and no one keeps guard."

And he to me, "All shall be closed when from Jehoshaphat they return here with the bodies which they have left above. In this part Epicurus with all his followers, who make the soul die with the body, have their burial-place. Therefore, to the question which you ask me you shall soon have satisfaction here within, and also to the wish which you hold from me."

And I, "Good leader, I do not keep my heart hidden from you except in order to speak little, and to this you have before now disposed me."

"O Tuscan, who go alive through the city of fire speaking thus modestly, may it please you to stop in this place. Your speech clearly shows you a native of that noble fatherland to which I perhaps did too much harm." Suddenly this sound issued from one of the coffers, whereat in fear I drew a little nearer to my leader. And he to me, "Turn round! what are you doing? See there Farinata who has risen erect: from the waist upwards you will see him all."

Already I had fixed my eyes on his, and he rose upright with chest and brow thrown back as if he had great scorn of Hell; and the bold and ready hands of my leader pushed me between the tombs to him, and he said, "Let your words be fitting."

When I was at the foot of his tomb, he looked at me for a moment, then, as if in disdain, asked me, "Who were your ancestors?"

And I, who was eager to obey, concealed nothing, but made all plain to him; whereupon he raised his brows a little; then he said, "They were fiercely adverse to me and to my forebears and to my party, so that twice over I scattered them."

"If they were driven forth, they returned from every quarter, both times," I answered him, "but yours have not learned that art well."

Then there arose to sight alongside of him a shade, visible to the chin: I think he had raised himself on his knees. He looked round about me as though he wished to see whether someone was with me, but when his expectation was quite spent, he said, weeping, "If you go through this blind prison by reason of high genius, where is my son, and why is he not with you?"

And I to him, "I come not of myself. He who waits yonder, whom perhaps your Guido had in disdain, is leading me through here."

Already his words and the manner of his punishment had read his name to me: hence was my answer so full.

Suddenly straightening up, he cried, "How? Did you say 'he had'? Does he not still live? Does the sweet light not strike his eyes?" And when he perceived that I made some delay in answering, he fell supine again and showed himself no more.

But the other, that great soul at whose instance I had stopped, changed not his aspect, nor moved his neck, nor bent his side. "And if," he said, continuing his first discourse, "they have ill learned that art, that fact torments me more than this bed.

But the face of the Lady who rules here will not be kindled fifty times before you shall know how much that art weighs. And, so may you return some time to the sweet world, tell me, why is that people so fierce against my kindred in all its laws?" Whereon I to him, "The havoc and the great slaughter, which dyed the Arbia red, cause such prayers to be made in our temple."

He sighed, and shook his head, then said, "I was not alone in that, nor surely without cause would I have moved with the others; but I was alone there where all agreed to make an end of Florence, the one who defended her before them all."

"Ah, so may your seed sometime find peace," I prayed him, "solve the knot which has here entangled my judgment. It seems, if I hear aright, that you see beforehand what time brings with it, but have a different manner with the present."

"Like one who has bad light, we see the things," he said, "which are remote from us: so much does the Supreme Ruler still shine on us; but when they draw near, or are, our intelligence is wholly vain, and unless others bring us word, we know nothing of your human state; wherefore you can comprehend that all our knowledge will be dead from that moment when the door of the future shall be closed."

Then, compunctious for my fault, I said, "Will you, now, tell him who fell back that his son is still among the living? And let him know that, if I was silent in response to him before, it was because my thoughts were already in that error which you have resolved for me."

And now my master was recalling me; wherefore with more haste I begged the spirit to tell me who were there with him; and he said to me, "Here I lie with more than a thousand. Here within is the second Frederick, and the Cardinal; and of the rest I do not speak."

With that he hid himself; and I turned my steps to the ancient poet, thinking on the words that seemed hostile to me. He set out, and then, as we went, he said to me, "Why are you so disturbed?" And I satisfied him in his question.

"Let your memory preserve what you have heard against yourself," that sage bade me, "and now give heed here—" and he raised his finger; "when you are before her sweet radiance whose fair eyes see all, from her you shall know of your life's journey."

Then he turned his steps to the left and, leaving the wall, we made our way toward the middle by a path that strikes into a valley which even up there annoyed us with its stench.

CANTO XI

ON THE edge of a high bank, formed by huge broken rocks in a circle, we came above a more cruel pen; and here, because of the horrible excess of the stench which the deep abyss throws out, we drew back to the cover of a great tomb, on which I saw an inscription that said, "I hold Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus drew from the right path."

"We must delay our descent, that the sense may first accustom itself a little to the vile breath, and then we shall not heed it." Thus my master; and I said to him, "Pray find some compensation, that the time may not be lost." And he, "Know that I am so minded."

"My son, within these rocks," he then began, "are three lesser circles, one below another, like those you are leaving.

All are full of accursed spirits; but in order that hereafter the sight alone may suffice you, hear how and why they are impounded.

"Of every malice that gains hatred in Heaven the end is injustice; and every such end, either by force or by fraud, afflicts another. But because fraud is an evil peculiar to man, it more displeases God, and therefore the fraudulent are the lower, and more pain assails them.

"All the first circle is for the violent: but because violence is done to three persons, it is divided and constructed in three rings. To God, to one's self, and to one's neighbor may violence be done: I say to them and to their things, as I shall make plain to you.

"By violence death and grievous wounds may be inflicted upon one's neighbor; and on his substance, ruins, burnings, and injurious extortions; wherefore the first ring torments all homicides and every one who smites wrongfully, despoilers and plunderers, in various troops.

"A man may lay violent hand upon himself, and upon his own property; and therefore in the second ring must every one repent in vain who deprives himself of your world, gambles away and dissipates his substance, and weeps there where he should be joyous.

"Violence may be done against the Deity, by denying and blaspheming Him in the heart, and despising Nature and her goodness; and therefore the smallest ring seals with its mark both Sodom and Cahors, and all who speak contemning God in their heart.

"Fraud, which gnaws every conscience, a man may practice upon one who trusts in him, or upon one who reposes no confidence. This latter way seems to sever only the bond of love which nature makes; wherefore in the second circle hypocrisy, flatteries, sorcerers, falsity, theft, simony, panders, barratry, and like filth have their nest.

"By the other way both that love which Nature makes is forgotten, and that also which is added to it and which creates a special trust; therefore, in the smallest circle, at the center of the universe and the seat of Dis, every traitor is consumed eternally."

And I, "Master, your discourse proceeds most clearly, and full well distinguishes this chasm and the people that it holds; but tell me: they of the fat marsh, and they whom the wind drives, and they whom the rain beats, and they who clash with such rough tongues, why are they not punished within the ruddy city, if God's anger is upon them? And if it is not, why are they in such plight?"

And he said to me, "Why does your wit so wander beyond its wont? Or your mind, whither does it gaze? Do you not remember the words with which your *Ethics* treats the three dispositions which Heaven wills not: incontinence, malice, and mad bestiality? and how incontinence less offends God and incurs less blame? If you consider well this doctrine, and bring to mind who they are that suffer punishment above, outside, you will see clearly why they are divided from these wicked spirits, and why the divine vengeance smites them with less wrath."

"O sun that heal every troubled vision, you do content me so, when you solve, that questioning, no less than knowing, pleases me; but turn back a little," I said, "to where you say that usury offends the divine Goodness, and loose the knot."

"Philosophy, for one who understands it," he said to me, "points out, not in one place alone, how Nature takes her course from divine Intellect and from Its art; and if you note well your *Physics*, you will find, after not many pages, that your art, as far as it can, follows her, as the pupil does his master; so that your art is as it were grandchild of God.

By these two, if you remember Genesis at the beginning, it behooves man to gain his bread and to prosper. But because the usurer takes another way, he contemns Nature in herself and in her follower, for he puts his hope elsewhere.

"But follow me now, for it pleases me to go: the Fishes are quivering on the horizon, and all the Wain lies over Caurus, and there, farther on, is the descent of the cliff."

CANTO XII

THE place where we came for the descent of the bank was alpine, and such, because of what was there, that every eye would shun it.

Like the ruin which struck the Adige in its flank, on this side of Trent, either by earthquake or through failure of support, where, from the top of the mountain whence it started, to the plain, the rock is so tumbled down as to give some passage to anyone above—such was the descent of that ravine; and on the edge of the broken chasm was outstretched the infamy of Crete that was conceived in the false cow. And when he saw us he bit himself, like one whom wrath rends inwardly.

My sage cried out toward him, "Perhaps you believe that here is the Duke of Athens, who dealt you your death up in the world. Get you gone, beast, for this man does not come tutored by your sister, but journeys here to see your punishments."

As a bull that breaks loose in the moment when it has received the mortal blow, and cannot go, but plunges this way and that, so I saw the Minotaur do. And my wary guide cried, "Run to the passage: while he is in fury it is well that you descend."

So we took our way down over that rocky debris, which often moved under my feet with the new weight. I was going along thinking, and he said, "Perhaps you are thinking on this ruin, guarded by that bestial wrath which I quelled just now. Know then that the other time I came down here into the nether Hell this rock had not yet fallen. But certainly, if I reckon rightly, it was a little before He came who took from Dis the great spoil of the uppermost circle, that the deep foul valley trembled so on all sides that I thought the universe felt love, whereby, as some believe, the world has many times been turned to chaos; and at that moment this ancient rock, here and elsewhere, made such downfall. But fix your eyes below, for the river of blood draws near, in which boils everyone who by violence injures others."

O blind cupidity and mad rage, which in the ~~brief~~ life so goad us on, and then, in the eternal, steep us so bitterly!

I saw a wide ditch bent in an arc, as one embracing all the plain, according as my guide had said, and between it and the foot of the bank were centaurs running in a file, armed with arrows, as in the world they were wont to go to the chase. Seeing us coming down they all stopped and from the band three came forward, with bows and shafts which they first selected; and one cried from a distance, "To what torment do you come, you who descend the slope? Tell us from there; if not, I draw my bow!"

My master said, "Our answer we will make to Chiron there beside you; to your own hurt was your will ever thus hasty." Then he nudged me and said, "That is Nessus, who died for the beautiful Dejanira and himself wrought vengeance for himself; and the one in the middle, who gazes on his own breast, is the great Chiron, he who brought up Achilles; the other is Pholus, who was so full of rage. Around the ditch they go by thousands, piercing with their arrows whatever spirit lifts itself out of the blood more than its guilt has allotted to it."

We drew near to those fleet beasts; and Chiron took an arrow and, with the notch of it, brushed back his beard upon his jaws; and when he had uncovered his great mouth, he said to his companions, "Have you observed that the one behind moves what he touches?

The feet of the dead are not wont to do so."

And my good leader, who was now at his breast, where the two natures are consorted, replied, "Indeed he is alive, and thus alone have I to show him the dark valley: necessity brings him to it, and not sport. From singing halleluiah, came one who gave me this new office. He is no robber, nor I a thievish spirit; but by that Power by which I move my steps on so wild a road, give us one of your band whom we may keep beside, that he may show us where the ford is, and carry this one on his back, who is not a spirit that can go through the air."

Chiron bent round on his right breast and said to Nessus: "Go back and guide them, then; and if another troop encounters you, make it give way."

We moved on then with the trusty escort, along the edge of the crimson boiling, in which the boiled were uttering piercing shrieks. I saw people in it, down even to the eyebrows, and the great centaur said, "These are tyrants who took to blood and plunder. Here they lament their merciless crimes: here is Alexander, and cruel Dionysius who made Sicily have woeful years; and that brow with the hair so black is Azzolino, and that other blond one is Opizzo of Este who up

in the world was indeed slain by his stepson." Then I turned to the poet, and he said, "Let him be first guide to you now, and me second."

A little farther on the centaur stopped beside a people who seemed to issue from that boiling stream as far as the throat. He showed us a spirit on one side alone and said, "That one clove, in God's bosom, the heart which on the Thames still drips with blood."

Then some I saw who had their heads, and even all their chests, out of the stream; and of these I recognized many. Thus more and more that blood sank down till it cooked only the feet; and here was our passage of the ditch.

"As on this hand you see that the boiling stream continually diminishes," said the centaur, "so I would have you believe that on this other it lowers its bed more and more, until it comes round again to the place where tyranny must groan. Divine justice there goads that Attila who was a scourge on earth, and Pyrrhus and Sextus; and forever milks the tears, unlocked by the boiling, from Rinier of Corneto and Rinier Pazzo, who made such warfare upon the highways."

Then he turned back and crossed the ford again.

CANTO XIII

Nessus had not yet reached the other side when we moved forward through a wood which was not marked by any path. No green leaves, but of dusky hue; no smooth boughs, but gnarled and warped; no fruits were there, but thorns with poison. Those wild beasts that hate tilled lands between Cecina and Corneto do not have thickets so rough or dense. Here the foul Harpies make their nests, who drove the Trojans from the Strophades with dismal announcement of future ill; they have broad wings, and human necks and faces, feet with claws, and their great bellies are feathered; they make lament on the strange trees.

And the good master began to say to me, "Before you enter farther, know that you are in the second ring, and shall be, until

you come to the horrible sand. Look well, therefore, and you shall see things that would make my words incredible."

I heard wailings uttered on every side, and saw no one who made them; wherefore, all bewildered, I stopped. I believe that he believed that I believed that all those voices from amid the trunks came from people who were hidden from us. Therefore the master said, "If you break off a little branch from one of these plants, the thoughts you have will all be cut short." Then I stretched my hand a little forward and plucked a twig from a great thornbush, and its stub cried, "Why do you break me?" And when it had become dark with blood, it began again to cry, "Why do you tear me? Have you no spirit of pity? We were men, and now are turned to stocks. Truly your hand ought to be more merciful had we been souls of serpents."

As from a green brand that is burning at one end, and drips from the other, hissing with the escaping air, so from that broken twig came out words and blood together; whereon I let fall the tip, and stood like one who is afraid.

"If he, O wounded spirit, had been able to believe before," replied my sage, "what he had never seen save in my verses,

he would not have stretched forth his hand against you; but the incredible thing made me prompt him to a deed that grieves me. But tell him who you were, so that by way of some amends he may refresh your fame in the world above, whither it is allowed him to return."

And the stub said, "You so allure me with your sweet words that I cannot keep silent; and may it not burden you that I am enticed to talk a little. I am he who held both the keys of Frederick's heart, and turned them, locking and unlocking, so softly that from his secrets I kept almost every one. So faithful was I to the glorious office that for it I lost both sleep and life. The harlot that never turned her whorish eyes from Caesar's household—the common death and vice of courts—inflamed all minds against me; and they, inflamed, did so inflame Augustus that my glad honors were changed to dismal woes. My mind, in scornful temper, thinking by dying to escape from scorn, made me unjust against my just self. By the new roots of this tree I swear to you that I never broke faith with my lord, who was so worthy of honor. And if one of you returns to the world, let him comfort my memory which still lies prostrate from the blow that envy gave it."

The poet waited a little, then said to me, "Since he is silent, do not lose time, but speak and ask of him, if you would know more."

To which I answered, "Do you ask him further of what you think may satisfy me, for I cannot, such pity fills my heart."

Therefore he began again, "So may this man do freely what you ask of him, imprisoned spirit, may it please you to tell us further how the soul is bound in these knots; and tell us, if you can, whether from such members any soul is ever loosed."

Then the stub puffed hard, and soon that breath was changed into this voice, "You shall be answered briefly. When the fierce soul quits the body from which it has uprooted itself, Minos sends it to the seventh gullet. It falls into the woods, and no part is chosen for it, but wherever fortune flings it, there it sprouts like a grain of spelt; it shoots up to a sapling, and to a wild growth; the Harpies, feeding then upon its leaves, give pain and to the pain an outlet. Like the rest we shall come, each for his cast-off body, but not, however, that any may inhabit it again; for it is not just that a man have what he robs himself of. Hither shall we drag them, and through the mournful wood our bodies will be hung, each on the thornbush of its nocuous shade."

We were still attentive to the stub, believing it might wish to say more to us, when like one aware of the wild boar and the chase approaching his post, who hears the beasts and the branches crashing, we were surprised by an uproar. And behold, two on the left hand, naked and torn, fleeing so hard that they were breaking every tangle of the wood. The one in front was shouting, "Now come, come quickly, death!" and the other, thinking himself too slow, "Lano, your legs were not so nimble at the jousts of the Toppo!" and perhaps because breath was failing him, he made one knot of himself and of a bush. Behind them the wood was full of black bitches, eager and fleet, like greyhounds loosed from the leash. On him who had squatted they set their teeth and tore him piecemeal, then carried off those woeful limbs.

My escort then took me by the hand and led me to the bush, which was lamenting in vain through its bleeding fractures. "O Jacopo da Santo Andrea," it cried, "what have you gained by making a screen of me? What blame have I for your sinful life?"

When my master had stopped beside it, he said, "Who were you, that through so many wounds blow forth with blood your doleful speech?"

And it to us, "O souls, who have arrived to see the shameful havoc that has thus torn my leaves from me, collect them at the foot of the wretched bush. I was of the city that changed her first patron for the Baptist, on which account he with his art will ever make her sorrowful; and were it not that at the passage of the Arno some semblance of him still remains, those citizens who afterwards rebuilt it on the ashes left by Attila would have labored in vain. I made me a gibbet of my own house."

CANTO XIV

BECAUSE the love of my native place constrained me, I gathered up the scattered twigs and gave them back to him who was already faint of voice. Thence we came to the confine, where the second ring is divided from the third and where a horrible mode of justice is seen.

To make these new things clear, I say we reached a plain which rejects all plants from its bed. The woeful wood is a garland round about it, as round the wood the dismal ditch. Here we stayed our steps at the very edge. The ground was a dry deep sand, not different in its fashion from that which once was trodden by the feet of Cato.

O vengeance of God, how much should you be feared by all who read what was revealed to my eyes!

I saw many herds of naked souls, who were all lamenting very miserably; and different laws seemed to be imposed upon them. Some were lying supine upon the ground, some sitting all crouched up, and others were going about incessantly. Those who moved about were far more numerous, and those who were lying in the torment were fewer, but they gave more tongue to their pain.

Over all the sand huge flakes of fire were falling slowly, like snow in the mountains without a wind. As the flames which Alexander, in those hot regions of India, saw fall upon his army, entire to the ground, whereat he had his legions tramp the soil, because the flakes were better extinguished before they spread, so did the eternal burning descend there, and the sand was kindled by it like tinder under the flint, to redouble the pain. The dance of the wretched hands was ever without repose, now here, now there, as they beat off the fresh burning.

I began, "Master, you who overcome all things except the obdurate demons that came out against us at the entrance of the gate, who is that great one who seems not to heed the fire, and lies disdainful and scowling, so that the rain seems not to ripen him?"

And that same one, who had perceived that I was asking my leader about him, cried out, "What I was living, that am I dead. Though Jove weary out his smith, from whom in anger he took the sharp bolt by which on my last day I was smitten; and though he weary out the others, turn by turn, in Mongibello at the black forge, crying, 'Good Vulcan, help, help!' even as he did at the fight of Phlegra, and hurl at me with all his might, he would not have thereby glad vengeance."

Then my leader spoke with such force as I had not heard him use before, "O Capaneus! in that your pride remains unquenched you are punished the more: no torment save your own raging would be pain to match your fury." Then he turned round to me with gentler look, saying, "That was one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, and held, and seems to hold, God in disdain and prize Him little; but as I said to him, his revilings are quite fitting adornments to his breast. Now come along behind me, and see that you do not set your feet upon the burning sand, but keep them back ever close to the woods."

In silence we came to where there spurts forth from the forest a little stream whose redness makes me shudder yet.

As issues from the Bulicame a rivulet which then the sinful women share among themselves, so this ran down across the sand. Its bottom and both its banks were made of stone, as were the margins on the side; wherefore I perceived that our passage was there.

"In all that I have shown to you since we entered through the gate whose threshold is denied to no one, nothing has been discerned by your eyes so notable as the present stream, which quenches every flame above it." These were the words of my leader; wherefore I prayed him to bestow on me the food for which he had bestowed the appetite.

"In the middle of the sea there lies a wasted country," he then said, "which is named Crete, under whose king the world once was chaste. A mountain is there, called Ida, which once was glad with waters and with foliage; now it is deserted like a thing outworn. Rhea chose it of old for the faithful cradle of her son and, the better to conceal him when he cried, made them raise shouts there. Within the mountain stands the great figure of an Old Man, who holds his back turned toward Damietta, and gazes on Rome as on his mirror: his head is fashioned of fine gold, his arms and breast are pure silver, then down to the fork he is of brass,

and down from there is all of choice iron, except that the right foot is baked clay, and he rests more on this than on the other. Every part except the gold is cleft by a fissure that drips with tears which, collected, force a passage through the cavern there. Their course is from rock to rock into this valley: they form Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon; then their way is down by this narrow channel until, there where there is no more descending, they form Cocytus—and what that pool is, you shall see; here therefore I do not describe it."

And I to him, "If the present stream flows down thus from our world, why does it appear to us only at this border?"

And he to me, "You know that the place is circular; and though you have come far, always to the left in descending to the bottom, you have not yet turned through the whole circle; wherefore if aught new appears to us, it should not bring wonder to your face."

And I again, "Master, where are Phlegethon and Lethe found? for about the one you are silent, and the other you say is formed by this rain."

"Truly you please me in all your questions," he answered, "but the boiling of the red water should well solve one that you ask.

Lethe you shall see, but out of this abyss, there where the souls go to wash themselves, when the fault repented of has been removed."

Then he said, "Now it is time to quit the wood; see that you come behind me: the margins, which are not burning, form a path, and over them every flame is quenched."

CANTO XV

Now one of the hard margins bears us on, and the vapor from the stream overshades, so that it shelters the water and the banks from the fire. As the Flemings between Wissant and Bruges, fearing the tide that rushes in on them, make the bulwark to drive back the sea; and as the Paduans do along the Brenta, to protect their towns and castles before Carentana feels the heat; in like fashion were these banks made, except that the builder, whoever he was, made them neither so high nor so thick.

We were already so far removed from the wood that I should not have seen where it was had I turned to look back, when we met a troop of souls that were coming alongside the bank, and each looked at us as men look

at one another under a new moon at dusk; and they knit their brows at us as the old tailor does at the eye of his needle.

Eyed thus by that company, I was recognized by one who took me by the hem, and cried, "What a marvel!" And I, when he reached out his arm to me, fixed my eyes on his scorched face, so that the baked features did not prevent my knowing him, and reaching down my hand toward his face, I answered, "Are you here, ser Brunetto?"

And he, "O my son, let it not displease you if Brunetto Latino turns back a little with you, and lets the train go on."

"I beg it of you with all my heart," I said to him, "and if you wish me to sit with you, I will, if it please him there with whom I go."

"O son," he said, "whoever of this flock stops even for an instant must then lie a hundred years without brushing off the fire when it strikes him. Therefore go on: I will come at your skirts, and then will rejoin my band who go lamenting their eternal woes."

I dared not descend from the path to go on a level with him, but I kept my head bowed like one who walks in reverence. He began, "What chance or destiny brings you down here before your last day, and who is this that shows the way?"

"There above, in the bright life," I answered him, "I went astray in a valley, before my age was at the full. Only yesterday morning I turned my back on it. He appeared to me, as I was returning into it, and by this path he leads me home."

And he to me, "If you follow your star you cannot fail of a glorious port, if, in the fair life, I discerned aright; and if I had not died so soon, seeing heaven so kind to you, I would have cheered you in your work. But that thankless, malignant people, who of old came down from Fiesole, and still smack of the mountain and the rock, will make themselves an enemy to you because of your good deeds; and there is cause: for among the bitter sorb-trees it is not fitting that the sweet fig should come to fruit. Old report in the world calls them blind; it is a people avaricious, envious and proud: look that you cleanse yourself of their customs. Your fortune holds for you such honor that the one party and the other shall be ravenous against you, but the grass shall be far from the goat. Let the Fiesolan beasts make fodder of themselves, and not touch the plant (if any spring yet upon their dungheap) in which survives the holy seed of those Romans who remained there when it became the nest of so much wickedness."

"If my prayer were all fulfilled," I answered him, "you would not yet be banished from human nature, for in my memory is fixed, and now saddens my heart, the dear, kind, paternal image of you, when in the world hour by hour you taught me how man makes himself eternal; and how much I hold it in gratitude it behooves me, while I live, to declare in my speech. That which you tell me of my course I write, and keep with a text to be glossed by a lady who will know how, if I reach her. This much I would have you know: so conscience chide me not, I am prepared for Fortune as she wills. Such earnest is not strange to my ears; therefore let Fortune whirl her wheel as pleases her, and the yokel his mattock."

Thereon my master turned round on his right and looked at me, then said, "He who notes it listens well."

None the less I go on speaking with ser Brunetto, and ask him who are the most noted and most eminent of his companions.

And he to me, "It is well to know of some of them; about the rest it is well that we be silent, as the time would be too short for so much talk. In brief, know that all were clerks, and great men of letters and of great fame, in the world defiled by one same sin.

Priscian goes on with that wretched crowd, and Francesco d'Accorso too; and you could also have seen there, had you hankered for such scurf, him who was transferred by the Servant of Servants from Arno to Bacchiglione, where he left his sinfully distended muscles. I would say more, but my going and my speech must not be longer, for I see yonder a new smoke rising from the sand: people are coming with whom I must not be. Let my *Treasure*, in which I yet live, be commended to you, and I ask no more."

Then he turned back, and seemed like one of those who run for the green cloth in the field at Verona, and of them seemed he who wins, not he who loses.

CANTO XVI

ALREADY I was in a place where the resounding of the water which was falling into the next circle was heard, like the hum which beehives make, when three shades set out together running, from a troop that was passing under the rain of the fierce torment. They came towards us, each crying, "Stop, you who by your dress seem to us to be from our degenerate city!" Ah me, what wounds old and new I saw in their members, burnt in by the flames! It pains me yet, only to remember it.

My teacher gave heed to their cries, then turned his face to me and said, "Now wait: to these one should show courtesy; and were it not for the fire which the nature of this place darts, I should say that haste befitted you more than them."

As we stopped, they resumed their ancient wail, and when they reached us, all three made of themselves a wheel. As champions, naked and oiled, are wont to do, eying their grip and vantage before exchanging thrusts and blows; thus each, wheeling, directed his face on me so that his neck kept turning in a direction contrary to his feet.

And, "If the wretchedness of this sandy place and our blackened and hairless faces," one of them began, "bring us and our prayers into contempt, let our fame move you to tell us who you are, that thus securely move living feet through Hell. He whose tracks you see me trample, though he goes naked and peeled, was of greater degree than you think: grandson of the good Gualdrada, his name was Guido Guerra, and in his lifetime he did much with counsel and with sword. This other, who treads the sand behind me, is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose voice should have been prized up in the world; and I who am placed with them in torment was Jacopo Rusticucci, and truly my fierce wife more than aught else has wrought me ill."

Had I been sheltered from the fire I would have thrown myself down among them, and I think my teacher would have permitted it;

but since I should have been burnt and baked, fear overcame my good will which made me greedy to embrace them. Then I began, "Not contempt, but sorrow, your condition fixed within me, so deeply that it will not leave me soon, when this my lord said to me words by which I felt that such men as you might be coming. I am of your city, and always have I rehearsed and heard with affection your deeds and honored names. I am leaving the gall, and I go for sweet fruits promised me by my truthful leader; but first I must go down to the center."

"So may your soul long direct your limbs, and your fame shine after you," he then replied, "tell us if courtesy and valor abide in our city as once they did, or if they are quite gone from it, for Guiglielmo Borsiere, who has been but short while in pain with us and goes yonder with our company, greatly afflicts us with his words."

"The new people and the sudden gains have engendered pride and excess in you, O Florence, so that already you weep for it!" This I cried with uplifted face; and the three, who understood this to be my answer, looked at each other as men look on hearing the truth.

"If at other times it costs you so little to satisfy others," they all replied, "happy you if you can speak thus at will. Therefore, if you escape from these dark regions and return to see again the beautiful stars, when you shall rejoice to say, 'I was there,' see that you speak of us to others." Then they broke their wheel and in their flight their nimble legs seemed wings; an "Amen" could not have been uttered so quickly as they vanished; wherefore it seemed well to my master to depart. I followed him; and we had gone but a little way when the sound of the water was so near that we could scarcely have heard each other speak. As that river which is first to hold its own course from Mount Viso eastward, on the left slope of the Apennine—called the Acquacheta above, before it descends into its low bed, and at Forlì loses that name—roars there over San Benedetto dell'Alpe, falling in one cataract when there might well have been a thousand; thus, down from a precipitous bank we found that dark water resounding, so that in short while it would have hurt our ears.

I had a cord girt round me, and with it I once thought to take the gay-skinned leopard.

After I had quite loosed it from me, as my leader bade, I passed it to him knotted and coiled. Whereon he, turning to the right, flung it some distance out from the edge, down into the depth of that abyss.

"Surely," I said to myself, "something strange will answer the strange signal which the master so follows with his eye."

Ah, how careful one should be with those who not only see the deed, but have the wit to read one's thoughts! "Soon will come up what I look for and what your mind dreams of," he said to me; "soon must it be discovered to your sight."

To that truth which has the face of a lie a man should always close his lips so far as he can, for through no fault of his it brings reproach; but here I cannot be silent; and, reader, I swear to you by the notes of this Comedy—so may they not fail of lasting favor—that I saw, through that thick and murky air, come swimming upwards a figure amazing to every steadfast heart, even as he returns who sometimes goes down to loose the anchor that is caught on a reef or something else hidden in the sea, who stretches upwards his arms and draws in his feet.

CANTO XVII

"BEHOLD the beast with the pointed tail, that passes mountains and breaks walls and weapons! Behold him that infects all the world!" Thus my leader began to speak to me; and he beckoned him to come to shore near the end of our rocky path. And that foul image of fraud came onward, and landed his head and his bust, but he did not draw his tail onto the bank. His face was the face of a just man, so benign was its outward aspect, and all his trunk was that of a serpent; he had two paws, hairy to the armpits; his back and breast and both his sides were painted with knots and circlets. Tartars or Turks never made cloth with more colors of groundwork and pattern, nor were such webs laid on the loom by Arachne.

As sometimes boats lie at the shore, part in the water and part on land, and as there among the guzzling Germans the beaver settles himself to wage his war, so lay that worst of beasts upon the edge of stone which bounds the sand. All his tail was quivering in the void, twisting upward its venomous fork, which had the point armed like a scorpion's.

My leader said, "Now we must bend our way a little, as far as that evil beast which is couching yonder." We descended, therefore, on the right hand side and took ten steps upon the verge, so as to keep well away from the sand and the flames. And when we had come to him, I see upon the sand, a little farther onwards, people sitting near the empty space.

Here the master said to me, "That you may carry away full experience of this ring, go and see their condition. Let your talk there be brief. Till you return I will speak with this beast, that he may lend us his strong shoulders."

So I went by myself still farther along the extreme margin of that seventh circle, where the woeful people were seated. Their grief was bursting forth through their eyes; with their hands they defended themselves, now here, now there, sometimes from the flames, sometimes from the burning ground;

not otherwise do the dogs in summer, now with muzzle, now with paw, when they are bitten by fleas, or flies, or gadflies. When I set my eyes on the faces of some of these on whom the grievous fire descends, I did not recognize any of them, but I perceived that from the neck of each hung a pouch, which had a certain color and a certain device, and thereon each seems to feast his eyes. And when I came among them, looking about, I saw, upon a yellow purse, azure that had the form and bearing of a lion. Then, gazing farther, I saw another, red as blood, display a goose whiter than butter. And one, who had his white wallet marked with an azure and gravid sow, said to me, "What are you doing in this ditch? Now get you gone! And since you are still alive, know that my neighbor Vitaliano shall sit here at my left side. With these Florentines am I, a Paduan; often they din my ears, shouting, 'Let the sovereign knight come who will bring the pouch with three goats!' " Then he twisted his mouth and stuck out his tongue, like an ox that licks its nose; and I, fearing lest a longer stay should anger him who had admonished me to stay but little, turned back from the weary souls.

I found my leader already mounted on the croup of the fierce beast, and he said to me, "Now be strong and bold: henceforward the descent is by such stairs as these. Mount in front, for I wish to be between, so that the tail may not harm you." As one who has the shivering-fit of the quartan so near that his nails are already pale, and he trembles all over at the mere sight of shade, such I became at these words of his; but shame rebuked me, which makes a servant brave in the presence of a good master. I seated myself on those ugly shoulders, and I wanted to say (but the voice did not come as I thought), "See that you embrace me!" But he who at other times had succored me in other peril clasped me in his arms and steadied me as soon as I was mounted up, then said, "Geryon, move on now; let your circles be wide, and your descending slow: remember the new burden that you have."

As the bark backs out little by little from its place, so Geryon withdrew thence; and when he felt himself quite free, he turned his tail to where his breast had been, and, stretching it out, moved it like an eel, and with his paws gathered the air to himself. I do not think that there was greater fear when Phaëthon let loose the reins, whereby the sky, as yet appears, was scorched,

nor when the wretched Icarus felt his loins unfeathering by the melting wax, and his father cried to him, "You go an ill way!" than was mine when I saw that I was in the air on every side, and saw extinguished every sight, save of the beast. He goes swimming slowly on, wheels and descends, but I perceive it only by a wind upon my face and from below. I heard now on our right the whirlpool making a horrible roaring below us, wherefore I stretch forth my head and look down. Then I became more terrified at the descent, for I saw fires and heard laments, whereat, trembling, I cling the closer. And I saw then—for I had not seen it before—the descending and the circling, by the great evils which were drawing near on every side.

As the falcon that has been long on the wing—that, without seeing lure or bird, makes the falconer cry, "Ah, ah, you're coming down!"—descends weary, with many a wheeling, to where it set out swiftly, and alights disdainful and sullen, far from its master: so, at the very foot of the jagged rock, did Geryon set us down at the bottom, and, disburdened of our persons, vanished like an arrow from the string.

CANTO XVIII

THERE is a place in Hell called Malebolge, all of stone which is the color of iron, like the wall that goes round it. Right in the middle of this malign field yawns a pit very wide and deep, of whose structure I shall tell in its place. That belt, therefore, which remains between the pit and the foot of the high hard bank is circular, and it has its bottom divided into ten valleys. Such a figure as where, for guard of the walls, successive ditches encircle castles, the place where they are presents, such an image did these make here. And as in such strongholds from their thresholds to the outer bank are little bridges, so from the base of the cliff ran crags which traversed the embankments and the ditches as far as the pit, which cuts them off and collects them.

In this place we found ourselves dropped from the back of Geryon, and the poet held to the left, and I came on behind. On the right hand I saw new woe, new torments, and new scourgers, with which the first ditch was replete. At its bottom were the sinners, naked; on our side of the middle they came facing us, and, on the other side, along with us, but with greater strides: thus the Romans, because of the great throng, in the year of the Jubilee, have taken measures for the people to pass over the bridge, so that on one side all face toward the Castle and go to St. Peter's, and on the other they go toward the Mount. Along the dark rock, on this side and on that, I saw horned demons with large scourges, who smote them fiercely from behind. Ah, how they made them lift their heels at the first blows! Truly none waited for the second or the third!

While I was going on, my eyes were met by one of them, and instantly I said, "This fellow I've certainly seen before"; wherefore I paused to make him out, and my gentle leader stopped with me and gave me leave to go back a little. And that scourged soul thought to hide himself, lowering his face, but it availed him little, for I said, "You there, casting your eye on the ground,

if the features you wear are not false, are Venedico Caccianemico. But what brings you to such pungent sauces?"

And he to me, "Unwillingly I tell it, but your plain speech, which makes me remember the former world, compels me. I was he who brought Ghisolabella to do the will of the Marquis, however the vile story may be reported. And I am not the only Bolognese who laments here; nay, this place is so full of them, that so many tongues are not now taught, between Savena and Reno, to say *sipa*; and if of this you wish assurance or testimony, recall to mind our avaricious nature." As he spoke thus, a demon smote him with his lash, and said, "Off, pander! There are no women here to coin."

I rejoined my escort; then, with but a few steps, we came to where a reef went out from the bank. This we very easily ascended and, turning to the right upon its jagged ridge, we quitted those eternal circlings.

When we were at the place where it yawns beneath to give passage to the scourged, my leader said, "Stop, and let the sight of these other ill-born souls strike on you, whose faces you have not seen, for they have been going along with us."

From the old bridge we viewed the train that was coming towards us on the other side, likewise driven by the scourge. The good master, without my asking, said to me, "Look at that great one who comes, and seems to shed no tear for pain. What a regal aspect he yet retains! That is Jason, who by courage and by craft despoiled the Colchians of the ram. He passed by the isle of Lemnos when the bold and pitiless women had given all their males to death. There, with tokens and with fair words, he deceived the young Hypsipyle who first had deceived all the rest. He left her there pregnant and forlorn: such guilt condemns him to such torment; and Medea too is avenged. With him go all who practice such deceit; and let this suffice for knowledge of the first valley and of those it holds in its fangs."

We were now where the narrow path intersects with the second embankment and makes of that the abutment to another arch. From there we heard people whining in the next pouch, and puffing with their muzzles and smiting themselves with their palms. The banks were crusted over with a mold from the vapor below that sticks on them and that did battle with the eyes and with the nose.

The bottom is so deep that we could nowhere see it without mounting to the crown of the arch where the ridge rises highest. Hither we came, and thence I saw down in the ditch a people plunged in filth that seemed to have come from human privies.

And while I was searching down there with my eyes, I beheld one whose head was so befouled with ordure that it did not appear whether he was layman or cleric. He bawled to me, "Why are you so greedy to look more at me than at the other filthy ones?" And I to him, "Because, if I rightly recall, I have seen you before with your hair dry, and you are Alessio Interminei of Lucca; therefore do I eye you more than all the rest." And he, then, beating his pate, "Down to this the flatteries wherewith my tongue was never cloyed have sunk me."

Hereupon my leader said to me, "Now push your look a little further forwards, so that your eye may fully reach the face of that foul and disheveled wench who is scratching herself there with her filthy nails, now squatting, now standing. She is Thaïs the whore, who answered her paramour when he said, 'Have I great favor with you?'—'Nay, wondrous!' And therewith let our sight be satisfied."

CANTO XIX

O Simon Magus! O you his wretched followers that, rapacious, prostitute for gold and silver the things of God which ought to be the brides of righteousness! now must the trumpet sound for you, since you are in the third pouch.

We were now at the next tomb, having climbed to that part of the reef which hangs directly over the middle of the ditch. O Supreme Wisdom, how great is the art which Thou showest in heaven, on earth, and in the evil world! and how justly does Thy Power dispense!

Upon the sides and upon the bottom I saw the livid stone full of holes, all of one size and each was round. They seemed to me not less wide or larger than those that are made for the baptizings in my beautiful San Giovanni;

one of which, not many years ago, I broke to save one who was drowning in it—and let this be the seal to undeceive all men.

From the mouth of each projected the feet of a sinner and his legs as far as the calf, and the rest was within. They all had both their soles on fire, because of which their joints were twitching so hard that they would have snapped ropes and withes. As flame on oily things is wont to move only on their outer surface, so it did there, from the heels to the toes.

"Master, who is that who writhes himself, twitching more than all his fellows," I said, "and who is sucked by a ruddier flame?" And he to me, "If you will have me carry you down there by that more sloping bank, from himself you shall learn of him and of his wrongs."

And I, "Whatever pleases you is to my liking: you are my lord and you know that I depart not from your will; and you know that which is left unsaid."

Then we came onto the fourth dike, turned and descended on our left, down to the perforated and narrow bottom; and the good master did not set me down from his side till he had brought me to the hole of him who was lamenting with his shanks.

"O wretched soul, whoever you are that, planted like a stake, have your upper part down under!" I began, "speak if you can."

I was standing there like the friar who confesses the perfidious assassin who, after he is fixed, recalls him in order to delay his death; and he cried, "Are you already standing there, are you already standing there, Bonifazio? By several years the writ has lied to me. Are you so quickly sated with those gains for which you did not fear to take by guile the beautiful Lady, and then to do her outrage?"

I became like those who stand as if bemocked, not comprehending what is answered them and unable to reply. Then Virgil said, "Tell him quickly, 'I am not he, I am not he whom you think!' and I answered as I was bidden; whereat the spirit writhed hard both his feet; then, sighing, and with tearful voice, he said to me, "Then what is it you ask of me? If to know who I am concerns you so much that you have for that come down the bank, know that I was vested with the great mantle; and I was truly a son of the she-bear, so eager to advance the cubs that up there I pursed my gains, and here I purse myself. Beneath my head are the others that preceded me in simony, mashed down and flattened through the fissures of the rock. I shall be thrust down there in my turn when he comes for whom I mistook you when I put my sudden question.

But longer already is the time that I have cooked my feet and stood inverted thus than he shall stay planted with glowing feet, for after him shall come a lawless shepherd from the west, of uglier deeds, one fit to cover both him and me. A new Jason he will be, like him we read of in Maccabees, but even as to that one his king was pliant, so to this one shall be he who governs France."

I do not know if here I was overbold, in answering him in just this strain, "Pray now tell me how much treasure did our Lord require of Saint Peter before he put the keys into his keeping? Surely he asked nothing save: 'Follow me.' Nor did Peter or the others take gold or silver of Matthias when he was chosen for the office which the guilty soul had lost. Therefore stay right here, for you are justly punished; and guard well the ill-got gain that made you bold against Charles. And were it not that reverence for the Great Keys which you held in the glad life even now forbids it to me, I would use yet harder words, for your avarice afflicts the world, trampling down the good and exalting the bad. It was shepherds such as you that the Evangelist had in mind when she that sitteth upon the waters was seen by him committing fornication with the kings:

she that was born with the seven heads, and from the ten horns had her strength, so long as virtue pleased her spouse. You have made you a god of gold and silver; and wherein do you differ from the idolators, save that they worship one, and you a hundred? Ah, Constantine, of how much ill was mother, not your conversion, but that dowry which the first rich Father took from you!" And while I intoned these notes to him, whether anger or conscience stung him, he kicked hard with both his feet. And indeed I think it pleased my guide, with so satisfied a look did he keep listening to the sound of the true words uttered. Thereupon he took me in his arms, and when he had me quite on his breast, remounted by the path where he had descended; nor did he tire of holding me clasped to himself, but carried me up to the summit of the arch which is the crossway from the fourth to the fifth dike. Here he gently set down his burden, gently because of the rugged and steep crag, which would be a hard passage for goats; and from there another valley was disclosed to me.

CANTO XX

Of new punishment I must make verses, and give matter to the twentieth canto of the first canzone, which is of the submerged.

I was now all prepared to look into the depth disclosed to me, which was bathed with tears of anguish, and through the circular valley I saw a people coming, silent and weeping, at the pace made by litanies in this world. As my sight went lower on them, each seemed to be strangely distorted between the chin and the beginning of the chest, for the face was turned toward the loins, and they had to come backwards, since seeing forward was denied them. Perhaps some time by stroke of palsy a man has been thus twisted right around, but I have not seen it, nor do I believe it possible.

Reader, so God grant you to take profit of your reading, think now for yourself how I could keep my cheeks dry when near at hand I saw our image so contorted that the tears from the eyes bathed the buttocks at the cleft. Truly I wept, leaning on one of the rocks of the hard crag, so that my guide said to me, "Are you even yet among the other fools? Here pity lives when it is altogether dead. Who is more impious than he who sorrows at God's judgment?

"Raise, raise your head, and see him for whom the earth opened before the eyes of the Thebans, whereat they all cried, 'Whither are you rushing, Amphiaraus? Why are you leaving the war?' And he stopped not from falling headlong down to Minos, who seizes every one. See how he has made a breast of his shoulders: because he wished to see too far before him, he looks behind and makes his way backwards.

"See Tiresias, who changed semblance when from male he became female, transforming all his members; and afterwards he had to strike again the two entwined serpents with his rod before he could resume his manly plumes.

"He that backs up to the other's belly is Aruns who, in the hills of Luni where grubs the Carrarese who dwells beneath,

had a cave for his abode among the white marbles, from which he could observe the stars and the sea with unobstructed view.

"And she that covers her bosom, which you cannot see, with her loose tresses, and has on that side all her hairy parts was Manto, who searched through many lands, then settled in the place where I was born—and on this I would have you hear me for a little. After her father had departed from life and the city of Bacchus had become enslaved, she wandered for a long time about the world. Up in fair Italy, at the foot of the mountains that bound Germany above Tirol, lies a lake which is called Benaco. By a thousand springs, I think, and more, the region between Garda and Val Camonica and Pennino is bathed by the water which settles in that lake, and in the middle of it is a spot where the pastors of Trent and Brescia and Verona, if they went that way, might give their blessing. Peschiera, a beautiful and strong fortress to confront the Brescians and the Bergamese, sits where the shore around is lowest. There all the water that in the bosom of Benaco cannot stay must descend and make itself a river, down through green pastures. Soon as the water starts to run, it is no longer named Benaco, but Mincio, as far as Govèrnolo, where it falls into the Po;

and after a short course it comes to a level where it spreads and makes a marsh that sometimes in summer is unwholesome. The cruel virgin, passing that way, saw land in the middle of the fen, untilled and without inhabitants. There, to shun all human fellowship she stopped with her servants to practice her arts, and lived, and left there her empty body. Afterwards the people who were scattered round about gathered to that place, which was strong because of the marsh it had on all sides. They built the city over those dead bones, and for her who first chose the place they called it Mantua, without other augury. Once the people within it were more numerous, before the folly of Casalodi was tricked by Pinamonte. Therefore I charge you, if you ever hear other origin given to my city, let no falsehood defraud the truth."

And I, "Master, your words are to me so certain and do so hold my confidence, that all others would be to me as dead coals. But tell me, of the people who are passing, if you see any that are worthy of note, for to that alone does my mind revert."

Then he to me, "That one, who from the cheek spreads his beard over his swarthy shoulders, was augur when Greece was left so empty of males

that they scarcely remained for the cradles, and with Calchas he gave the moment for cutting the first cable at Aulis. Eurypylus was his name, and thus my high Tragedy sings of him in a certain passage—as you know well, who know the whole of it. That other who is so spare in the flanks was Michael Scot, who truly knew the game of magic frauds. See Guido Bonatti; see Asdente, who now would fain have attended to his leather and his thread, but too late repents. See the wretched women who left the needle, the spool, and the spindle, and became fortune-tellers; they wrought spells with herbs and with images.

"But now come, for already Cain with his thorns holds the confines of both the hemispheres, and touches the wave below Seville; and already last night the moon was round. You must remember it well, for it did you no harm sometimes in the deep wood."

Thus he spoke to me, and we went on the while.

CANTO XXI

THUS from bridge to bridge we came along, talking of things of which my Comedy is not concerned to sing, and we had reached the summit, when we stopped to see the next cleft of Malebolge and the next vain lamentations: and I saw it strangely dark.

As in the Arsenal of the Venetians, in winter, the sticky pitch for caulking their unsound vessels is boiling, because they cannot sail then, and instead, one builds his ship anew and another plugs the ribs of his that has made many a voyage, one hammers at the prow and another at the stern, this one makes oars, that one twists ropes, another patches jib and mainsail; so, not by fire but by divine art, a thick pitch was boiling there below, which overglued the bank on every side. It I saw, but in it I saw nothing save the bubbles raised by the boiling, and all of it swelling up and settling down together.

While I was gazing fixedly down on it, my leader, saying, "Watch out, watch out!" drew me to himself from the place where I was standing. Then I turned round like one who is eager to see what he must shun, and who is dismayed by sudden fear, so that he looks back but does not delay his flight to look, and behind us I saw a black devil come running up along the crag. Ah, how savage he was in aspect and how fierce he seemed in act, with outspread wings and light on his feet. His shoulder, which was sharp and high, was laden by both haunches of a sinner, and he held him grasped by the tendons of the feet.

He spoke from our bridge, "O Malebranche, here's one of Saint Zita's Elders! Thrust him under, while I go back for more, to that city where there's a fine supply of them: every man there is a barrator, except Bonturo; there they make *Ay* of *No*, for cash."

Down he hurled him, and turned back on the hard crag, and never was an unleashed mastiff so swift in pursuit of a thief. The sinner sank under and rose again, rump up; but the devils, who were under cover of the bridge, cried, "Here's no place for the Holy Face! Here you'll swim otherwise than in the Serchio! And so, unless you want to feel our grapples, do not come out above the pitch."

Then they struck him with more than a hundred prongs, and said, "Here you'll have to dance under cover, so grab on secretly, if you can." Just so cooks make their scullions plunge the meat down into the cauldron with their forks, that it may not float.

The good master said to me, "That it may not be seen that you are here, squat down behind a jag, so that you may have some screen for yourself; and whatever outrage be done to me, be not afraid, for I know about things here and was in a like fray once before."

Then he passed on beyond the head of the bridge, and when he arrived upon the sixth bank he had need to show a steadfast front. With the fury and uproar of dogs that rush out upon some poor beggar who straightway begs from where he stops, these rushed out from under the little bridge and turned all their hooks against him. But he cried, "Let none of you be savage! Before you touch me with your forks, let one of you come forward to hear me, and then decide about grappling me."

All cried, "Let Malacoda go"; whereon, while the rest stood still, one moved and came up to him, saying, "What will it avail him?"

"Do you think, Malacoda, to see me come here," said my master, "secure thus far against all your defenses,

without divine will and propitious fate? Let us pass, for it is willed in Heaven that I show another this savage way." Then was his pride so fallen, that he let the hook drop at his feet, and said to the others, "Now let no one strike him."

And my leader to me, "Oh you that sit asquat among the splinters of the bridge, securely now return to me." Wherefore I moved and quickly came to him; and the devils all pressed forward, so that I feared they might not keep the pact. Thus I once saw the soldiers afraid who were coming out of Caprona under pledge, seeing themselves among so many enemies. I drew near to my leader, pressing in close to him, and did not turn my eyes from their looks, which were not good. And they lowered their forks, one of them saying, "Shall I touch him on the rump?" and another answering, "Yes, see that you nick it for him." But that demon who was speaking with my leader turned round instantly, saying, "Hold, hold, Scarmiglione!"

Then he said to us, "To go farther by this crag will not be possible, for the sixth arch lies all shattered at the bottom; but if it is still your pleasure to go forward, then proceed along this ridge: nearby is another crag that affords a way.

Yesterday, five hours later than now, completed one thousand two hundred and sixty-six years since the road was broken here. I am sending some of my company that way, to see if any is out taking the air. Go with them, for they will not harm you."

"Come forward, Alichino and Calcabrina," he began to say, "and you, Cagnazzo; and let Barbariccia lead the ten. Let Libicocco come too, and Draghignazzo, and tusked Ciriatto and Graffiacane and Farfarello and crazy Rubicante. Search around the boiling glue. Let these two be safe as far as the next crag that all unbroken goes across the dens."

"O me! master, what is this I see?" I said. "Ah, let us go alone without escort, if you know the way, for, as for myself, I want none! If you are as wary as you are wont, do you not see how they grind their teeth and with their brows threaten harm to us?" And he to me, "I would not have you be afraid; let them grind on as they please, for they do it at the boiled wretches."

They wheeled round by the bank on the left, but first each pressed his tongue between his teeth at their leader for a signal, and he had made a trumpet of his arse.

CANTO XXII

Ere now have I seen horsemen moving camp, and beginning an assault and making their muster, and sometimes retiring to escape; I have seen coursers over your land, O Aretines, and I have seen the starting of raids, the onset of tournaments, and the running of jousts, now with trumpets and now with bells, with drums and castle-signals, with native things and foreign—but never to so strange a pipe have I seen horsemen or footmen set forth, or ship by sign of land or star!

We were going along with the ten demons: ah, savage company! but "in church with saints and with guzzlers in the tavern!" My attention was all on the pitch, in order to see every condition of the pouch, and of the people who were burning in it.

Like dolphins when with their arching backs they give sign to mariners that they should prepare to save their ship, so from time to time one of the sinners would show his back to alleviate his pain, and hide it again, quicker than a lightning-flash. And as at the edge of the water of a ditch the frogs lie with only their muzzle out, so that they hide their feet and the rest of their bulk, so were the sinners on every side; but as Barbariccia approached, so would they draw back under the boiling.

I saw—and my heart still shudders at it—one waiting, just as it happens that one frog stays and another jumps. And Graffiacane, who was nearest to him, hooked him by his pitchy locks, and haled him up so that to me he seemed an otter. I already knew all their names, having noted them well when they were chosen, and then observed what they called each other.

"O Rubicante, see that you set your claws on him and flay him," shouted all the accursed crew together. And I, "Master, pray learn, if you can, who is the hapless wretch that has fallen into the hands of his enemies."

My leader drew up to his side, and asked him whence he came; and he replied, "I was born in the kingdom of Navarre.

My mother placed me as servant of a lord, for she had borne me to a ribald destroyer of himself and of his substance. Then I was of the household of the good King Thibaut: there I set myself to practice barratry, for which I render reckoning in this heat."

Then Ciriatto, from whose mouth on either side protruded a tusk, as of a boar, made him feel how one of them could rip. The mouse had come among evil cats; but Barbariccia locked him in his arms and said, "Stand back while I enfork him," then turned to my master and said, "Ask on, if you would learn more from him before another mangles him."

My leader therefore, "Tell us, then: of the other sinners under the pitch, do you know any who are Italian?" And he, "I parted just now from one who was a neighbor of theirs. Would I were still under cover with him, for I should not fear claw or hook." And Libicocco cried, "We have endured too much!" and seized his arm with the grapple so that, tearing, he ripped out a muscle of it. Draghignazzo also made as if to hook him in the legs, at which their captain wheeled round on them all with an ugly look.

When they were a little quieted, my leader straightway asked him who was still gazing at his wound,

"Who was that from whom you say you made an ill departure to come ashore?"

And he answered, "That was Fra Gomita, he of Gallura, vessel of every fraud, who had his master's enemies in his hand, and did so deal with them that they all praise him for it. He took the cash and dismissed them smoothly, as he says; and in his other affairs too he was no petty barrator, but sovereign. Don Michel Zanche of Logodoro keeps company with him, and in talking of Sardinia their tongues are never weary. O me! see that other one grinding his teeth! I would tell more, but I fear he's preparing to scratch my itch." And the great marshal, turning to Farfarello, who was rolling his eyes to strike, said, "Get back there, villainous bird!"

"If you would see or hear Tuscans or Lombards," the frightened one then began again, "I will make some of them come. But let the Malebranche stand back a bit, so that they may not fear their vengeance; and I, sitting in this same place, for one that I am, will make seven come when I whistle, as is our custom when any of us gets out."

Cagnazzo at these words raised his muzzle and said, shaking his head, "Hear the cunning trick he has contrived to throw himself down in."

Whereon he, who had artifices in great store, replied, "I am indeed cunning when I contrive greater sorrow for my companions!" Alichino held in no longer and, in opposition to the others, said to him, "If you plunge, I won't follow you at a gallop, but I'll beat my wings above the pitch. Let the ridge be left, and let the bank be a screen, to see if you alone are more than a match for us."

Now, reader, you shall hear new sport. All turned their eyes toward the other side, he first who had most opposed it. The Navarrese chose well his time, planted his feet firmly on the ground, and in an instant leaped and broke away from their marshal. Thereat each was stung with his fault, but he most who was the cause of the blunder; wherefore he started and cried out, "You're caught!" But it availed him little, for wings could not outspeed the terror: the one went under, and the other, flying, turned his breast upward; not otherwise the wild duck that suddenly dives down, when the falcon approaches, and he returns upward, vexed and defeated. Calcabrina, furious at the trick, went flying after him, eager for the sinner to escape, so as to have a scuffle;

and, when the barrator had disappeared, he turned his claws on his fellow and grappled with him above the ditch; but the other was indeed a full-grown hawk to claw him well, and both fell into the middle of the boiling pond. The heat at once unclutched them, but there was no getting out, they had so beglued their wings. Barbariccia, lamenting with the rest, made four of them fly to the other bank, each with his fork; and very quickly, on this side and on that, they descended to their posts and stretched their hooks toward the belimed ones, who were already cooked within their crust; and we left them thus embroiled.

CANTO XXIII

SILENT, alone, without escort, we went on, one before and the other behind, as Friars Minor go their way. My thought was turned by the present brawl on the fable of Aesop where he told of the frog and the mouse; for Ay and Yea are not more alike than the one case is to the other, if we compare the beginning and the end attentively. And just as one thought springs from another, so from that another was born which redoubled my first fear. I thought: they have been fooled because of us, and with such hurt and mockery as I believe must vex them greatly. If rage be added to their malice, they will come after us, fiercer than the dog to the leveret he snaps up.

Already I felt my hair all bristling with fear as I went along intent on what was behind us, and I said, "Master, unless you quickly hide yourself and me, I dread the Malebranche. We have them after us already: I so imagine them that I hear them now."

And he, "If I were of leaded glass, I should not draw to me your outward semblance more quickly than I receive your inward. Even now came your thoughts among mine, with like action and like look, so that of both I have made one counsel. If it be that the slope on the right lies so that we can descend into the next ditch, we shall escape the imagined chase."

He had not yet finished telling me his plan when I saw them coming with outstretched wings, not very far off, bent on taking us. My leader instantly took me up, like a mother who is awakened by the noise and sees beside her the kindled flames, and catches up her child and flies, and, more concerned for him than for herself, does not stay even to put on a shift; and, down from the ridge of the hard bank he gave himself supine to the sloping rock that closes one side of the next pouch. Never did water run so fast through a sluice to turn the wheel of a landmill when it approaches nearest to the paddles,

as my master went down that bank, carrying me along upon his breast, not as his companion but as his child. Scarcely had his feet reached the bed of the depth below when they were on the height directly over us; but there was nothing to fear, for the high Providence which willed to set them as ministers of the fifth ditch deprives them all of power to leave it.

There below we found a painted people who were going round with very slow steps, weeping and in their looks tired and overcome. They wore cloaks with cowls down over their eyes, of the cut that is made for the monks of Cluny, so gilded outside that they dazzle, but within, all of lead, and so heavy that those Frederick imposed were of straw. O toilsome mantle for eternity!

We turned, ever to the left, along with them, intent on their dreary weeping. But, because of the load, that tired folk came on so slowly that our company was new at every step we took; wherefore I said to my guide, "Pray find someone who may be known by deed or name, looking round as we go." And one who caught the Tuscan speech cried after us, "Stay your steps, you who run thus through the dusky air!

Perhaps you shall obtain from me what you ask." At which my leader turned to me and said, "Wait, and then proceed at his pace." I stopped, and saw two show by their look great haste of mind to be with me, but their load and the narrow way retarded them. When they came up, with eye askance they gazed at me awhile without uttering a word; then, turning to each other, they said, "This man seems alive, by the action of his throat; and if they are dead, by what privilege do they go divested of the heavy stole?" Then they said to me, "O Tuscan, who are come to the assembly of the sad hypocrites, do not disdain to tell us who you are."

And I to them, "I was born and grew up on the fair stream of Arno, at the great town, and I am in the body that I have always had; but you, who are you, down whose cheeks distils such woe as I see? And what penalty is this upon you that glitters so?" And one of them replied to me, "The orange cloaks are of lead so thick that the weight thus causes their scales to creak. We were Jovial Friars, and Bolognese: I named Catalano, and he Loderingo, and by your city chosen together, as one man alone is usually chosen, to maintain the peace; and we were such, that it still appears around the Gardingo."

I began, "O Friars, your evil . . ."—but I said no more, for there caught my eye one crucified on the ground with three stakes. When he saw me he writhed all over, blowing in his beard with sighs; and Fra Catalano, observing this, said to me, "That transfixed one you are gazing at counseled the Pharisees that it was expedient to put one man to torture for the people. He is stretched out naked across the way, as you see, and needs must feel the weight of each that passes; and in like fashion is his father-in-law racked in this ditch, and the others of that council which was a seed of evil for the Jews." Then I saw Virgil wonder over him who was thus outstretched, as on a cross, so vilely in the eternal exile. Then he directed his words to the friar, "May it not displease you, if it be permitted, to tell us if there lies any passage on the right by which we two can get out of here, without requiring some of the black angels to come to deliver us from this bottom."

He then replied, "Nearer than you hope is a ridge of rock that starts from the great encircling wall and spans all the savage valleys, save that at this one it is broken down and does not cover it; you will be able to mount up by the ruin that lies against the side and piles up at the bottom."

My leader stood for a moment with bowed head, then said, "He that hooks the sinners back yonder gave a poor account of the matter." And the friar, "At Bologna once I heard it said that the devil has many vices, among which I heard that he is a liar and the father of lies."

Then my guide went on with great strides, somewhat disturbed with anger in his look; and I departed from those burdened souls, following the prints of the beloved feet.

CANTO XXIV

In that part of the youthful year when the sun tempers his locks beneath Aquarius, and the nights already wane towards half the day, when the hoarfrost copies on the ground the image of his white sister, but the temper of his pen lasts but short while—the peasant, whose fodder fails, rises and looks out and sees the fields all white; at which he smites his thigh, returns indoors and grumbles to and fro, like the poor wretch who knows not what to do; then comes out again and recovers hope when he sees how in but little time the world has changed its face, and taking his crook, drives forth his sheep to pasture. Thus my master caused me dismay when I saw his brow so troubled, and thus quickly came the plaster to the hurt.

For when we came to the ruined bridge my leader turned to me with that sweet look which I saw first at the foot of the mountain. After taking some counsel with himself, looking first well at the ruin, he opened his arms and laid hold of me. And like one who works and reckons, always seeming to provide beforehand, so, while lifting me up toward the top of one great rock, he was looking out another crag, saying, "Grapple next on that, but try first if it will bear you." It was no road for anyone wearing the mantle, for we—he light and I pushed on—could scarcely mount from jag to jag. And had it not been that on that dike the slope was shorter than on the other, I know not about him, but I should have been quite vanquished. But because all Malebolge inclines toward the mouth of the nethermost well, the site of each valley is such that one side is higher and the other lower. We, however, came at length to the point where the last stone is broken off. The breath was so spent from my lungs, when I was up, that I could go no farther, but sat down as soon as I got there.

"Now it behooves you thus to cast off sloth," said my master, "for sitting on down or under coverlet, no one comes to fame,

without which whoso consumes his life leaves such vestige of himself on earth as smoke in air or foam on water. Rise, therefore; conquer your panting with the soul that wins every battle, if with its heavy body it sinks not down. A longer ladder must be climbed; it is not enough to have left these spirits. If you understand me, now act that it may profit you." I then rose, showing myself better furnished with breath than I felt, and said, "Go on, for I am strong and resolute."

We took the way up the ridge, which was rugged, narrow, and difficult, and far steeper than the last; and I talked as I went, so as not to seem exhausted, when a voice, ill-suited for forming words, came out from the next ditch. I do not know what it said, though I was already on the crown of the arch that crosses there, but he who was speaking seemed to be moving. I had turned my eyes downward, but because of the darkness my keen gaze could not reach the bottom; wherefore I said, "Master, pray go on to the next belt, and let us descend the wall, for from this point not only do I hear without understanding, but I look down and make out nothing."

"Other reply," he said, "I do not give you than the doing, for a fit request should be followed by the deed in silence."

We descended at the end of the bridge where it joins the eighth bank, and then the ditch was manifest to me: I saw within it a fearful throng of serpents, of kinds so strange that the memory of it still chills my blood. Let Libya with her sands vaunt herself no more! for though she bring forth chelydri, jaculi, and phareae, and cenchres with amphisbaena, she never, with all Ethiopia, nor with the land that lies on the Red Sea, showed plagues so numerous or malignant. Amid this cruel and most dismal swarm were people running naked and terrified, without hope of hiding-place or heliotrope. They had their hands bound behind with serpents: these thrust through their loins the head and tail, which were knotted in front.

And lo! at one who was near our bank darted a serpent that transfixed him there where the neck is joined to the shoulders, and never was *o* or *i* written so fast as he took fire and burned, and must sink down all turned to ashes; and when he was thus destroyed on the ground, the dust drew together of itself and at once resumed the former shape; thus by great sages it is affirmed that the Phoenix dies and is born again when it approaches its five-hundredth year.

In its life it feeds not on herb or grain, but only on tears of incense and amomum; and nard and myrrh are its last winding-sheet.

And as one who falls and knows not how, by force of some devil dragging him to the ground, or by some other obstruction that binds a man, who, when he rises, stares about him, all bewildered by the great anguish he has suffered and, looking, sighs: such was that sinner when he rose.

Oh power of God! how severe it is, that showers down such blows for vengeance!

My leader then asked him who he was; to which he answered, "Short while ago I rained down from Tuscany into this fierce gullet. A bestial life, not human, pleased me, mule that I was. I am Vanni Fucci, beast, and Pistoia was my fitting den." And I to my leader, "Tell him not to slip away, and ask what sin thrust him down here, for I have seen him a man of blood and rage." And the sinner, who heard, did not dissemble, but directed toward me his mind and look, and colored with dismal shame, then said, "It grieves me more that you have caught me in the misery where you see me than when I was taken from the other life. I cannot refuse you what you ask. I am put down so far because I was a thief in the sacristy of the fair adornments:

a deed that was once falsely put upon another. But that you may not rejoice in this sight, if ever you escape from these dark regions, open your ears and hear what I announce: Pistoia first strips herself of Blacks; then Florence renews her people and her ways. Mars draws a vapor from Val di Magra which is wrapt in turbid clouds, and with impetuous and bitter storm there shall be fighting on Campo Piceno, whence suddenly it shall rend the mist, so that every White shall be struck by it. And I have said this that it may grieve you."

CANTO XXV

At the end of his words the thief raised up his hands with both the figs, crying, "Take them, God, for I aim them at you!" From this time forth the serpents were my friends, for one then coiled itself about his neck, as if it said, "You shall say no more," and another about his arms and bound him again, so riveting itself in front that he could not give a jog with them.

Ah, Pistoia, Pistoia! why do you not decree to turn yourself to ashes and to last no longer, since you surpass your own seed in evil-doing? Through all the dark circles of Hell I saw no spirit so proud against God, not him who fell from the walls at Thebes.

He fled, speaking no more; and I saw a centaur full of rage come shouting, "Where is he, where is the unripe one?"

Maremma, I do believe, has not so many snakes as he upon his croup up to where our form begins; and on his shoulders behind the nape lay a dragon with outstretched wings that sets on fire whomever it encounters. My master said, "That is Cacus, who beneath the rock of Mount Aventine full often made a lake of blood. He goes not with his brothers on one same road, because of the cunning theft he made of the great herd that lay near him; and for this his crooked ways were ended under the club of Hercules, who dealt him perhaps a hundred blows and he felt not ten of them."

While he thus spoke, the centaur ran past, and there came below us three spirits whom neither I nor my guide perceived till they cried out, "Who are you?" whereon we broke off our talk and gave heed to them alone. I did not know them; but it happened, as often happens by some chance, that one had occasion to name another, saying, "Where can Cianfa be?" Wherefore, in order that my leader might remain attentive, I placed my finger upwards from my chin to my nose.

If, reader, you are now slow to credit that which I shall tell, it will be no wonder, for I who saw it do scarcely admit it to myself.

While I kept my eyes on them, lo! a serpent with six feet darts up in front of one and fastens on him all over. With the middle feet it clasped the belly, and with its fore feet took his arms, then struck its teeth in one and the other cheek; its hind feet it spread upon his thighs, and put its tail between them, and bent it upwards on his loins behind. Ivy was never so rooted to a tree as the horrid beast entwined its own limbs round the other's; then, as if they had been of hot wax, they stuck together and mixed their colors, and neither the one nor the other now seemed what it was at first: even as in advance of the flame a dark color moves across the paper, which is not yet black and the white dies away. The other two were looking on, and each cried, "Oh me, Agnello, how you change! Lo, you are already neither two nor one!"

Now the two heads had become one, when we saw the two shapes mixed in one face, where both were lost. Two arms were made of the four lengths; the thighs with the legs, the belly and the chest, became members that were never seen before. Each former feature was blotted out: the perverse image seemed both and neither, and such, with slow pace, it moved away.

As the lizard under the great scourge of the dog days, darting from hedge to hedge, seems a lightning-flash, if it cross the way, so appeared, making for the bellies of the other two, a small fiery serpent, livid and black as a peppercorn; and it transfixed in one of them that part by which we first receive our nourishment, then fell down before him, stretched out. The transfixed one gazed at it, but said nothing, only standing there yawning as if sleep or fever had come upon him. He eyed the reptile, the reptile him; the one from his wound, the other from its mouth, smoked violently, and their smoke met.

Let Lucan now be silent, where he tells of the wretched Sabellus and of Nasidius, and let him wait to hear what now comes forth. Concerning Cadmus and Arethusa let Ovid be silent, for if he, poetizing, converts the one into a serpent and the other into a fountain, I envy him not; for two natures front to front he never so transmuted that both forms were prompt to exchange their substance. They mutually responded in such a way that the reptile cleft its tail into a fork, and the wounded one drew his feet together. The legs and thighs so stuck together that soon no mark of the juncture could be seen;

the cloven tail took on the shape that was lost in the other; and its skin grew soft, the other's hard. I saw the arms drawing in at the armpits, and the brute's two feet, which were short, lengthening out in proportion as the other's arms were shortening. Then the hind paws, twisted together, became the member that man conceals, and from his the wretch had put forth two feet. While the smoke veils the one and the other with a new color, and generates hair on the one part and strips it from the other, the one rose upright and the other fell down, but neither turned aside the baleful lamps beneath which each was changing his muzzle. He that was erect drew his in toward the temples, and from the excess of matter that came in there the ears issued from the smooth cheeks; that which did not run back, but was retained, made of that excess a nose for the face and thickened the lips to due size. He that lay prone drives the snout forward and draws the ears back into the head as the snail does its horns; and the tongue, which before was whole and fit for speech, divides, and in the other the forked tongue joins up; and the smoke stops. The soul that was become a brute flees hissing along the valley; and the other, speaking, spits after it.

Then he turned on it his new shoulders, and said to the third, "I'll have Buoso run on all fours along this road, as I have done!"

Thus I saw the seventh ballast change and transmute—and here let the novelty be my excuse, if my pen goes aught astray. And though my eyes were somewhat confused and my mind bewildered, these could not flee so covertly but that I clearly distinguished Puccio Sciancato, and it was he alone, of the three companions that came first, who was not changed; the other was he whom you, Gaville, lament.

CANTO XXVI

REJOICE, O Florence, since you are so great that over sea and land you beat your wings, and your name is spread through Hell! Among the thieves I found five of your citizens, such that shame comes to me—and you rise thereby to no great honor. But if near morning our dreams are true, you shall feel ere long what Prato, as well as others, craves for you. And if it were already come, it would not be too soon. Would it were, since indeed it must, for it will weigh the more on me the more I age.

We departed thence, and by the stairs which the jutting rocks had made for our descent before, my leader remounted and drew me up; and pursuing the solitary way among the jags and rocks of the ridge, the foot could not advance without the hand.

I sorrowed then, and sorrow now again, when I turn my mind to what I saw; and I curb my genius more than I am wont, lest it run where virtue does not guide it; so that, if a kindly star or something better has granted me the good, I may not grudge myself that gift.

As many as the fireflies which the peasant, resting on the hill—in the season when he that lights the world least hides his face from us, and at the hour when the fly yields to the mosquito—sees down along the valley, there perhaps where he gathers the grapes and tills: with so many flames the eighth ditch was all agleam, as I perceived as soon as I came where the bottom could be seen. And as he who was avenged by the bears saw Elijah's chariot at its departure, when the horses rose erect to heaven—for he could not so follow it with his eyes as to see aught save the flame alone, like a little cloud ascending: so each flame moves along the gullet of the ditch, for not one shows its theft, and each steals away a sinner.

I was standing on the bridge, having risen up to see, so that if I had not laid hold of a rock I should have fallen below without a push; and my leader, who saw me so intent, said, "Within the fires are the spirits: each swathes himself with that which burns him."

"Master," I replied, "I am the more certain for hearing you, but already I thought it was so, and already I wanted to ask: who is in that fire which comes so divided at its top that it seems to rise from the pyre where Eteocles was laid with his brother?"

He answered me, "Therewithin are tormented Ulysses and Diomedes, and they go together thus under the vengeance as once under the wrath; and in their flame they groan for the ambush of the horse which made the gate by which the noble seed of the Romans went forth; within it they lament the craft, because of which the dead Deidamia still mourns Achilles, and there for the Palladium they bear the penalty."

"If they can speak within those sparks," I said, "master, I earnestly pray you, and pray again, that my prayer avail a thousand, that you deny me not to wait until the horned flame comes hither: you see how with desire I bend towards it."

And he to me, "Your prayer deserves much praise and therefore I accept it; but do you restrain your tongue: leave speech to me, for I have understood what you wish—and perhaps, since they were Greeks, they would be disdainful of your words."

After the flame had come where it seemed to my leader the time and place, I heard him speak in this manner:

"O you who are two within one fire, if I deserved of you while I lived, if I deserved of you much or little when in the world I wrote the lofty lines, move not; but let the one of you tell where he went, lost, to die."

The greater horn of the ancient flame began to wag, murmuring, like one that is beaten by a wind; then carrying to and fro its tip, as if it were a tongue that spoke, it flung forth a voice and said, "When I departed from Circe, who had detained me more than a year there near Gaeta, before Aeneas had so named it, neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my aged father, nor the due love which would have made Penelope glad, could conquer in me the longing that I had to gain experience of the world, and of human vice and worth. But I put forth on the deep open sea with one vessel only, and with that small company which had not deserted me. The one shore and the other I saw as far as Spain, as far as Morocco, and Sardinia, and the other islands which that sea bathes round. I and my companions were old and slow when we came to that narrow outlet where Hercules set up his markers,

that men should not pass beyond. On the right hand I left Seville, on the other I had already left Ceuta. 'O brothers,' I said, 'who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the west, to this so brief vigil of our senses that remains to us, choose not to deny experience, following the sun, of the world that has no people. Consider your origin: you were not made to live as brutes, but to pursue virtue and knowledge.'

"With this little speech I made my companions so keen for the voyage that then I could hardly have held them back. And turning our stern to the morning, we made of our oars wings for the mad flight, always gaining on the left. The night now saw the other pole and all its stars, and ours so low that it did not rise from the ocean floor. Five times the light beneath the moon had been rekindled and as many quenched, since we had entered on the passage of the deep, when there appeared to us a mountain dark in the distance, and to me it seemed the highest I had ever seen. We rejoiced, but soon our joy was turned to grief, for from the new land a whirlwind rose and struck the forepart of the ship.

Three times it whirled her round with all the waters, and the fourth time it lifted the stern aloft and plunged the prow below, as pleased Another, till the sea closed over us."

CANTO XXVII

THE flame was already erect and quiet, having ceased to speak, and, with the consent of the gentle poet, now went away from us, when another that came on behind it made us turn our eyes to its tip for a confused sound that came from it. As the Sicilian bull (which bellowed first with the cry of him—and that was right—who had shaped it with his file) was wont to bellow with the voice of the victim, so that, though it was of brass, yet it seemed transfixed with pain: thus, having at first no course or outlet in the fire, the doleful words were changed into its language. But after they had found their way up through the tip, giving it the same vibration that the tongue had given in their passage,

we heard it say, "O you to whom I direct my voice and who just now spoke Lombard, saying, 'Now go your way, I do not urge you more,' although I have come perhaps somewhat late, let it not irk you to stop and speak with me: you see it irks not me, and I am burning. If you are but now fallen into this blind world from that sweet land of Italy whence I bring all my guilt, tell me if the Romagnoles have peace or war; for I was of the mountains there between Urbino and the chain from which the Tiber springs."

I was still bent down and intent when my leader touched me on the side and said, "You speak: he is Italian." And I, who was already prepared to answer, began without delay, "O soul that are hidden down there, your Romagna is not, nor ever was, without war in the hearts of her tyrants; but no open war have I left there now. Ravenna is as it has been for many a year: the eagle of Polenta broods over it so that he covers Cervia with his wings. The city that once bore the long siege and made of the French a bloody heap, finds itself again under the green claws. And the old mastiff and the new of Verrucchio, who made the ill disposal of Montagna, ply their teeth where they are wont.

The cities on Lamone and Santerno are ruled by the young lion of the white lair, who changes side from summer to winter. And that city whose flank the Savio bathes, even as it lies between the plain and the mountain, so does it live between tyranny and freedom. Now I pray you tell us who you are; be not more grudging than another has been to you, so may your name endure in the world!"

After the flame had roared for a while in its own fashion, the sharp point moved to and fro, and then gave forth this breath, "If I thought that my answer were to one who might ever return to the world, this flame would shake no more; but since from this depth none ever returned alive, if what I hear is true, I answer you without fear of infamy.

"I was a man of arms, and then a corded friar, trusting, so girt, to make amends; and certainly my hope would have come full, but for the High Priest—may ill befall him!—who set me back in my first sins: and how and wherefore I would have you hear from me. While I was the form of the flesh and bones my mother gave me, my deeds were not those of the lion, but of the fox. I knew all wiles and covert ways, and plied the art of them so well that to the ends of the earth their sound went forth.

When I saw myself come to that part of my life when every man should lower the sails and coil up the ropes, that which before had pleased me grieved me then, and with repentance and confession I turned friar, and—woe is me!—it would have availed.

"The Prince of the new Pharisees, having war near the Lateran—and not with Saracens or with Jews, for his every enemy was Christian, and none had been to conquer Acre, nor been a merchant in the Soldan's land—regarded neither the supreme office and holy orders in himself, nor, in me, that cord which used to make its wearers leaner; but as Constantine sought out Sylvester within Soracte to cure his leprosy, so this one sought me out as the doctor to cure the fever of his pride. He asked counsel of me, and I kept silent, for his words seemed drunken. Then he spoke again, 'Let not your heart mistrust. I absolve you here and now, and do you teach me how I may cast Penestrino to the ground. I can lock and unlock Heaven, as you know; for the keys are two, which my predecessor did not hold dear.' Thereon the weighty arguments pushed me to where silence seemed to me the worst, and I said, 'Father, since you do wash me of that sin

into which I now must fall, long promise with short keeping will make you triumph on the High Seat.'

"Then, when I died, Francis came for me; but one of the black Cherubim said to him, 'Do not take him, wrong me not! He must come down among my minions because he gave the fraudulent counsel, since which till now I have been at his hair; for he who repents not cannot be absolved, nor is it possible to repent of a thing and to will it at the same time, for the contradiction does not allow it.'

"O wretched me! how I started when he seized me, saying, 'Perhaps you did not think that I was a logician!' He bore me to Minos, who coiled his tail eight times round his rough back, and then, biting it in great rage, said, 'This is a sinner for the thievish fire'; wherefore here where you see me I am lost, and go, thus robed, in bitterness."

When he had thus ended his words the sorrowing flame departed, twisting and tossing the pointed horn.

We passed onward, I and my guide, along the reef as far as the next arch which spans the ditch where they pay the fee who acquire their load by sundering.

CANTO XXVIII

WHO could ever fully tell, even in unfettered words, though many times narrating, the blood and the wounds that I now saw? Surely every tongue would fail, because of our speech and our memory which have little capacity to comprehend so much.

Were all the people assembled again who once in the fateful land of Apulia bewailed their blood shed by the Trojans, and those of the long war that made so vast a spoil of rings—as Livy writes, who does not err—together with those who felt the pain of blows in the struggle with Robert Guiscard, and those others whose bones are still heaped up at Ceperano, where every Apulian was false, and there by Tagliacozzo where old Alardo conquered without arms;

and one should show his limb pierced through, and another his cut off, it would be nothing to equal the foul fashion of the ninth pouch.

Truly a cask, through loss of mid-board or side-piece, gapes not so wide as one I saw, cleft from the chin to the part that breaks wind; his entrails were hanging between his legs, and the vitals could be seen and the foul sack that makes ordure of what is swallowed. While I was all absorbed in gazing on him, he looked at me and with his hands pulled open his chest saying, "Now see how I rend myself, see how mangled is Aboo Lahab! In front of me goes Aboo Jahl weeping, cleft in the face from chin to forelock ; and all the others whom you see here were in their lifetime sowers of scandal, schism, and therefore are thus cleft. A devil is here behind that fashions us thus cruelly, putting again to the edge of the sword each of this throng when we have circled the doleful road; for the wounds are closed up before any of us pass again before him. But who are you that are musing on the ridge, perhaps to delay going to the punishment pronounced on your own accusations?"

"Neither has death yet reached him, nor does guilt bring him for torment," replied my master, "but in order to give him full experience,

it behooves me, who am dead, to lead him down here through Hell from circle to circle; and this is as true as that I speak to you."

More than a hundred there were who, when they heard him, stopped in the ditch to look at me, forgetting their torment in their wonder.

"Tell Fra Dolcino, then, you who perhaps will see the sun before long, if he would not soon follow me here, so to arm himself with victuals that stress of snow may not bring victory to the Novarese, which otherwise would not be easy to attain."

After he had raised one foot to go on, Abu Lahab said this to me, then set it on the ground to depart.

Another who had his throat pierced through and his nose cut off up to the eyebrows, and only one ear left, stopped with the rest to gaze in astonishment, and before the others opened his gullet, which was all red outside, and said, "O you whom guilt does not condemn and whom I saw above in the land of Italy, if too great likeness does not deceive me, if ever you return to see the sweet plain that slopes from Vercelli to Marcabò, remember Pier da Medicina. And make it known to the two best men of Fano, to messer Guido and to Angiolello, that unless our foresight here is vain,

they will be thrown out of their vessel and sunk near La Cattolica, through the treachery of a fell tyrant. Between the islands of Cyprus and Majorca Neptune never saw so great a crime, not of the pirates nor of the Argolic people. That traitor who sees with but one eye, and holds the city from sight of which one who is here with me would wish he had fasted, will make them come to parley with him, then will so deal with them that for the wind of Focara they will not need vow or prayer."

And I to him, "Show me and explain, if you would have me carry news of you above, who he is to whom that sight was bitter." Then he laid hold of the jaw of one of his companions and opened the mouth, saying, "This is he, and he does not speak: being banished, he quenched the doubt in Caesar, affirming that to a man prepared delay was always harmful." Ah, how aghast appeared to me, with tongue cut off in his throat, Curio who was so daring in his speech!

And one who had both hands lopped off, raising the stumps through the murky air so that the blood befouled his face, cried, "You will recall Mosca too who said, alas! 'A thing done has an end!' which was seed of ill to the Tuscan people"

—"and death to your own stock," I added then; whereat he, heaping sorrow on sorrow, went off as one crazed with grief.

But I stayed to view the troop, and saw a thing that I should be afraid even to relate without more proof, but that conscience, the good companion that emboldens a man under the hauberk of feeling itself pure, reassures me. Truly I saw, and seem to see it still, a trunk without the head going along as were the others of that dismal herd, and it was holding the severed head by the hair, swinging it in hand like a lantern, and it was gazing at us and saying: "O me!" Of itself it was making a lamp for itself, and they were two in one and one in two—how this can be, He knows who so ordains. When he was right at the foot of the bridge he raised high his arm with the head, in order to bring near to us his words, which were, "See now my grievous penalty, you who, breathing, go to view the dead: see if any other is so great as this! And that you may carry news of me, know that I am Bertran de Born, he who to the young king gave the evil counsels. I made the father and the son rebel against each other. Ahithophel did not more with Absalom and David by his wicked instigations.

Because I parted persons thus united, I carry my brain parted from its source, alas! which is in this trunk. Thus is the retribution observed in me."

CANTO XXIX

The many people and the strange wounds had made my eyes so drunken that they longed to stay and weep; but Virgil said to me, "What are you still gazing at? Why does your sight still rest down there among the dismal mutilated shades? You have not done so at the other pits. Consider, if you think to count them, that the valley circles two and twenty miles; and already the moon is beneath our feet. The time is now short that is allowed us, and there is more to see than you see here."

"If you had given heed to my reason for looking," I answered then, "perhaps you would have granted me a longer stay."

Meanwhile my leader was going on, and I was following after him, making my reply, and adding, "Within that hollow where I was but now holding my eyes so fixedly, I believe a spirit of my own blood laments the guilt that costs so dear down there."

Then said the master, "Do not let your thought distract itself on him henceforth; attend to somewhat else, and let him stay there; for I saw him there below the bridge point at you and fiercely threaten with his finger, and I heard them call him Geri del Bello. You were then so wholly occupied with him who once held Hautefort that you did not look that way till he was gone."

"O my leader," I said, "the violent death which is not yet avenged for him by any who is partner in the shame made him indignant; wherefore, as I judge, he went on without speaking to me, and thereby has he made me pity him the more."

Thus we spoke, up to the first place on the crag which shows the next valley, had there been more light, right to the bottom. When we were above the last cloister of Malebolge, so that its lay brothers could be seen by us, strange lamentations assailed me which had their shafts barbed with pity; at which I covered my ears with my hands. Such suffering as there would be if, between July and September, the sick from the hospitals of Valdichiana and of Maremma and of Sardinia were all in one ditch together, such was there here; and such a stench issued thence as is wont to come from festered limbs.

We descended onto the last bank of the long crag, keeping ever to the left, and then my sight was clearer down into the depth, where the ministress of the High Lord, infallible Justice, punishes the falsifiers whom she registers here.

I do not believe it was a greater sorrow to see the whole people in Aegina sick, when the air was so full of corruption that every animal, even to the little worm, fell dead, and afterwards, as the poets hold for certain, the ancient peoples were restored from seed of ants, than it was to see, through that dark valley, the spirits languishing in divers heaps. One lay on his belly, one lay on the shoulders of another, and one shifted on all fours along the dismal way. Step by step we went in silence, watching and listening to the sick, who were unable to raise themselves.

I saw two sitting propped against each other, as pan is leaned against pan to warm, spotted from head to foot with scabs; and never did I see currycomb plied by stable-boy whose master waits for him, nor by one who unwillingly stays awake, as each of these plied thick the clawing of his nails upon himself, for the great fury of the itch which has no other succor;

and the nails were dragging down the scab, as a knife does the scales of bream or of other fish that has them larger.

"O you who with your fingers dismail yourself," my leader began to one of them, "and who sometimes make pincers of them, tell us if there is any Italian among these who are here within, so may your nails suffice you eternally in this work."

"We are Italians, both of us, whom you see so disfigured here," replied the one, weeping, "but who are you that inquire of us?"

And my leader said, "I am one who with this living man descend from ledge to ledge, and I mean to show him Hell."

Then their mutual support was broken, and each turned toward me trembling, with others who overheard him. The good master drew quite close to me, saying, "Tell them what you will." And I began, as he desired, "So may memory of you in the first world not fade away from the minds of men, but may it live under many suns, tell me who you are and of what people; let not your ugly and disgusting punishment make you fear to declare yourselves to me."

"I was of Arezzo," one of them replied, "and Albero of Siena had me burned; but what I died for does not bring me here.

True it is, I said to him, speaking in jest, 'I would know how to raise myself through the air in flight'; and he, who had a lively desire and little wit, would have me show him the art; and only because I did not make him a Daedalus, he had me burned by one who held him as a son. But, for the alchemy I practiced in the world, Minos, to whom it is not allowed to err, condemned me to this last pouch of the ten."

And I said to the poet, "Now was ever a people so vain as the Sienese? Surely not so the French by far."

Whereat the other leper, who heard me, responded to my words, "Except for Stricca, who knew how to spend in moderation; and except for Niccolò, who first devised the costly use of the clove, in the garden where such seed takes root; and except for the company in which Caccia d'Asciano squandered the vineyard and the great purse, and Abbagliato showed his wit. But, that you may know who thus seconds you against the Sienese, sharpen your eye toward me, that my face may answer well to you, and you will see that I am the shade of Capocchio, who falsified the metals by alchemy; and you must recall, if I rightly eye you, how good an ape of nature I was."

CANTO XXX

In the time when Juno was wroth for Semele against the Theban blood, as she showed more than once, Athamas became so insane that, seeing his wife go carrying their two children on either hand, he cried, "Let us spread the nets to take the lioness and the whelps at the pass!" and then stretched out his pitiless claws, grasping the one that was named Learchus, and whirled him round and dashed him on a rock; and she drowned herself with her other burden. And when Fortune brought low the all-daring pride of the Trojans, so that the king together with his kingdom was blotted out, Hecuba, sad, wretched and captive, after she had seen Polyxena slain and, forlorn, discerned her Polydorus on the sea-strand,

she, driven mad, barked like a dog, so had the sorrow wrung her soul. But no fury of Thebes or of Troy was ever seen so cruel against any, in rending beasts, much less human limbs, as were two pallid shades that I saw biting and running like the pig when it is let out of the sty. The one came at Capocchio and fixed its tusks on his neck-joint, so that, dragging him, it made his belly scratch along the solid bottom. And the Aretine, who was left, trembling said to me, "That goblin is Gianni Schicchi, and he goes rabid mangling others thus."

"Oh," said I to him, "so may the other not fix its teeth on you, be pleased to tell who it is, before it breaks away from here."

And he to me, "That is the ancient spirit of infamous Myrrha, who became loving of her father beyond rightful love. She came to sin with him by falsifying herself in another's form, even as the other, who goes off there, ventured, that he might gain the lady of the herd, to counterfeit in himself Buoso Donati, making a will and giving it due form."

And when the furious two on whom I had kept my eyes had passed on, I turned to look at the other ill-born shades, and

I saw one shaped like a lute, if only he had been cut short at the groin from the part where a man is forked. The heavy dropsy which, with its ill-digested humor, so unmates the members that the face does not answer to the paunch, made him hold his lips apart, like the hectic who, for thirst, curls the one lip toward his chin and the other upwards.

"Oh you who are without any punishment, and I know not why, in this dismal world," he said to us, "behold and consider the misery of Master Adam. Living, I had in plenty all that I wished, and now, alas! I crave one drop of water! The little brooks that from the green hills of Casentino run down into the Arno, making their channels cool and moist, are always before me, and not in vain, for the image of them parches me far more than the malady that wastes my features. The rigid justice that scourges me draws occasion from the place where I sinned, to give my sighs a quicker flight; there is Romena, where I falsified the currency stamped with the Baptist, for which on earth I left my body burnt. But if I could see here the miserable soul of Guido or of Alessandro or of their brother, I would not give the sight for Fonte Branda.

One of them is here within already, if the raging shades who go around speak true; but what does it avail me whose limbs are tied. If I were only still so light that I could move one inch in a hundred years, I would have set out already on the road to seek him among this disfigured people, for all it is eleven miles around and not less than half a mile across. Because of them am I in such a family: they induced me to strike the florins that had three carats of alloy."

And I to him, "Who are the two wretches that are smoking like wet hands in winter, lying close to your confines on the right?"

"Here I found them when I rained down into this trough," he answered, "and since then they have not given a turn, nor do I think they will, to all eternity. The one is the false woman who accused Joseph; the other is the false Sinon, Greek from Troy. Burning fever makes them reek so strongly."

And one of them, who took offense perhaps at being named so darkly, with his fist struck him on his stiff paunch; it sounded like a drum; and Master Adam struck him in the face with his arm, which seemed no less hard, saying to him, "Though I am kept from moving, by the weight of my limbs, which are heavy, I have an arm free for such a need."

To which he replied, "When you were going to the fire you didn't have it thus ready; but you did have it as ready, and more, when you were coining."

And the dropsied one, "You speak the truth in this; but you were not so true a witness there at Troy where you were questioned about the truth."

"If I spoke falsely, you falsified the coin," said Sinon, "and I am here for a single sin, and you for more than any other demon."

"Remember, perjurer, the horse," he of the swollen paunch replied, "and may it torture you that all the world knows of it."

"And to you be torture the thirst that cracks your tongue," said the Greek, "and the foul water that makes your belly thus a hedge before your eyes."

Then the coiner, "Thus for fever your jaws gape wide, as usual; for if I have thirst and if humor stuffs me, you have the burning and an aching head, and to lick the mirror of Narcissus you would not want many words of invitation."

I was standing all intent to listen to them, when the master said to me, "Now just you keep on looking a little more and I will quarrel with you!"

When I heard him speak to me in anger, I turned to him with such shame that it circles through my memory even yet.

And as is he who dreams of something hurtful to him and, dreaming, wishes that it were a dream, so that he longs for that which is, as if it were not, such I became that, unable to speak, I wanted to excuse myself, and did excuse myself all the while, not thinking I was doing it.

"Less shame washes away a greater fault than yours has been," said the master, "therefore disburden yourself of all sadness; and do not forget that I am always at your side, should it again fall out that fortune find you where people are in a similar dispute, for the wish to hear that is a base wish."

CANTO XXXI

One and the same tongue first stung me, so that it tinged both my cheeks, and then it supplied the medicine to me; thus I have heard that the lance of Achilles and of his father was wont to be the cause, first of a sad and then of a good gift.

We turned our backs to the wretched valley, going up by the bank that girds it round, crossing over it in silence. Here it was less than night and less than day, so that my sight went little ahead, but I heard a blast from a horn so loud that it would have made any thunderclap seem faint, and it directed my eyes, following back on its course, wholly to one place. After the dolorous rout when Charlemagne lost the holy gest, Roland did not sound a blast so terrible.

I had not long kept my head turned in that direction when I seemed to see many lofty towers; whereon I, "Master, say, what city is this?" And he to me, "It is because you pierce the darkness from too far off that you stray in your imagining; and when you reach the place you will see plainly how much the sense is deceived by distance; therefore, spur yourself on somewhat more." Then lovingly he took me by the hand and said, "Before we go further forward, in order that the fact may seem less strange to you, know that these are not towers, but giants, and every one of them is in the pit, round about the bank from the navel downward."

As when a mist is vanishing, the sight little by little shapes out that which the vapor hides that fills the air; so, as I pierced the thick and murky atmosphere and came on nearer and nearer to the brink, error fled from me and fear grew upon me; for, as on its round wall Montereggione crowns itself with towers, so here the horrible giants, whom Jove still threatens from heaven when he thunders, betowered with half their bodies the bank that encompasses the pit.

And already I discerned the face of one of them, his shoulders and his breast, and great part of his belly, and down along his sides both arms.

Nature assuredly, when she gave up the art of making creatures such as these, did right well to deprive Mars of such executors; and though she repents not of elephants and whales, he who looks subtly holds her therein more just and more discreet, for where the instrument of the mind is added to an evil will and to great power, men can make no defense against it. His face seemed to me as long and huge as the pine cone of St. Peter's at Rome, and his other bones were in proportion with it; so that the bank, which was an apron to him from his middle downward showed us fully so much of him above, that three Frieslanders would have made ill vaunt to have reached to his hair; for I saw thirty great spans of him down from the place where a man buckles his cloak.

"*Raphèl mayì amecche zabì almi*," the fierce mouth, to which sweeter psalms were not fitting, began to cry. And my leader towards him, "Stupid soul, keep to your horn and with that vent yourself when rage or other passion takes you. Search at your neck and you will find the belt that holds it tied, O soul confused: see how it lies across your great chest." Then he said to me, "He is his own accuser: this is Nimrod, through whose ill thought one language only is not used in the world.

Let us leave him alone and not speak in vain, for every language is to him as his is to others, which is known to none."

Then, turning to the left, we went farther on and, at the distance of a crossbow shot, we found the next, far more savage and bigger. Who had been the master to bind him I do not know, but he had his right arm shackled behind, and the other in front, by a chain which held him clasped from the neck downward, so that upon his uncovered part it was wound as far as the fifth coil.

"This proud one chose to try his strength against supreme Jove," said my guide, "wherefore he has such requital. Ephialtes he is called, and he made the great endeavors when the giants put the gods in fear. The arms he plied he moves no more."

And I to him, "If it were possible, I should wish my eyes might have experience of the immense Briareus." To which he replied, "Hard by here you shall see Antaeus, who speaks and is unfettered, and he will put us down into the bottom of all guilt. He whom you wish to see is much farther on, and he is bound and fashioned like this one, except that he seems more ferocious in his look."

Never did mighty earthquake shake a tower so violently as Ephialtes forthwith shook himself.

Then more than ever did I fear death, and nothing else was wanted for it but the fear, had I not seen his bonds. We then proceeded farther on and came to Antaeus, who stood full five ells, not reckoning his head, above the rock.

"O you that, in the fateful valley which made Scipio heir of glory, when Hannibal with his followers turned his back, did once take for prey a thousand lions, and through whom, had you been at the high war of your brothers, it seems that some still believe the sons of earth would have conquered, set us down below—and disdain not to do so—where the cold locks up Cocytus. Do not make us go to Tityus nor to Typhon: this man can give of that which is longed for here. Bend down, therefore, and do not curl your lip. He can yet restore your fame on earth, for he lives and expects long life yet, if grace does not untimely call him to itself."

Thus spoke my master; and the other in haste stretched out those hands of which Hercules once felt the mighty grip, and took my leader; and Virgil, when he felt their grasp, said to me, "Come here, that I may take you," and then of himself and me he made one bundle.

Such as the Garisenda seems to one's view, beneath the leaning side, when a cloud is passing over it against the direction in which it leans,

such did Antaeus seem to me as I watched to see him stoop—and it was such a moment that I should have wished to go by another road! But he set us down gently on the bottom that swallows Lucifer with Judas, nor did he linger there thus bent, but raised himself like the mast of a ship.

CANTO XXXII

If I had harsh and grating rhymes, as would befit the dismal hole on which all the other rocks converge and weigh, I would press out more fully the juice of my conception; but since I do not have them, it is not without fear that I bring myself to speak; for to describe the bottom of the whole universe is not an enterprise to be taken up in sport, nor for a tongue that cries mamma and daddy. But may those ladies aid my verse who aided Amphion to wall in Thebes, so that the telling may not be diverse from the fact. O you beyond all others misbegotten crowd who are in the place whereof it is hard to speak, better had you here been sheep or goats!

When we were down in the dark pit beneath the feet of the giant, far lower, and I was still gazing up at the high wall, I heard a voice say to me, "Look how you pass: take care not to tread on the heads of the wretched weary brothers."

At this I turned and saw before me, and under my feet, a lake which through frost had the semblance of glass and not of water. Never did the Danube in Austria, nor the far-off Don under its cold sky, make in winter so thick a veil for their current as there was here: for had Tambernic fallen on it, or Pietrapana, it would not have given a creak, even at the edge. And as the frog lies to croak with muzzle out of the water, when the peasant girl dreams often of her gleaning, so, livid up to where the hue of shame appears, were the doleful shades within the ice, setting their teeth to the note of the stork. Each held his face turned downwards; by the mouth their cold, and by the eyes the misery of their hearts, is testified among them.

When I had looked round me awhile, I glanced down at my feet and saw two who were pressed so close together that they had the hair of their heads intermixed. "Tell me, you who thus press your breasts together," I said, "who are you?" And they bent back their necks, and when they had raised their faces towards me, their eyes, which before were moist only within, welled up with tears, which ran down over the lips, and the frost bound each to each and locked them even tighter; clamp never bound board on board so strongly; whereupon they butted together like two goats, such anger overcame them.

And one who had lost both ears from the cold, with his face still downwards said, "Why do you gaze so much on us? If you would know who these two are, the valley whence the Bisenzio descends belonged to their father Albert and to them. They issued from one body; and all Caina you may search and not find a shade more fit to be fixed in ice; not him whose breast and shadow were pierced with a single blow from Arthur's hand; not Focaccia; not this one, who so obstructs me with his head that I see no farther, and who was named Sassol Mascheroni—if you are Tuscan you now know well who he was. And that you may not put me to further speech, know that I was Camiscion de' Pazzi, and I await Carlino to exculpate me."

After that I saw a thousand faces made purple by the cold, whence a shuddering comes over me, and always will, at frozen fords. And while we were going toward the center to which all gravity collects, and I was shivering in the eternal chill, whether it was will or fate or chance I do not know, but, walking among the heads, I struck my foot hard in the face of one.

Wailing he railed at me, "Why do you trample on me? If you do not come to increase the vengeance of Montaperti, why do you molest me?"

And I, "Master, now wait here for me, that I may rid me of a doubt respecting this one, then you shall make me hasten as much as you wish." My leader stopped; and I said to the shade who was still cursing bitterly, "Who are you that thus reproach another?" "Nay, who are you," he answered, "that go through Antenora smiting the cheeks of others, so that, were you alive, it would be too much."

"Alive I am," was my reply, "and if you crave fame, it may be worth much to you that I note your name among the rest." And he to me, "The contrary is what I crave. Take yourself hence and trouble me no more, for ill do you know how to flatter in this depth." Then I seized him by the hair of the nape and said, "Either you'll name yourself, or not a hair will be left on you here."

Whereon he to me, "Though you strip me bald, I will not tell you or show you who I am, though you should fall a thousand times upon my head."

I had already twisted his hair in my hand and had yanked out more than one tuft, he barking and with his eyes kept close down, when another cried, "What ails you, Bocca? Is it not enough for you to make noise with your jaws, but you must bark? What devil is at you?"

"Now," said I, "I do not wish you to speak more, accursed traitor, for to your shame will I carry true news of you."

"Go away," he answered, "and tell what you will, but if you get out from here do not be silent about him that just now had his tongue so ready. He is lamenting here the silver of the French. 'I saw,' you can say, 'him of Duera, there where the sinners are put to cool.' Should you be asked who else was there, you have at your side him of the Beccheria whose gullet was slit by Florence. Gianni de' Soldanieri I think is farther on, with Ganelon, and with Tebaldello who opened Faenza while it slept."

We had already left him when I saw two frozen in one hole so close that the head of the one was a hood for the other; and as bread is devoured for hunger, so the upper one set his teeth upon the other where the brain joins with the nape. Not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw the temples of Menalippus for rage than this one was doing to the skull and the other parts.

"O you who by so bestial a sign show hatred against him whom you devour, tell me the wherefore," I said, "on this condition, that if you with reason complain of him, I, knowing who you are and his offense, may yet requite you in the world above, if that with which I speak does not dry up."

CANTO XXXIII

FROM his savage repast the sinner raised his mouth, wiping it on the hair of the head he had spoiled behind, then began, "You will have me renew desperate grief, which even to think of wrings my heart before I speak of it. But if my words are to be seed that may bear fruit of infamy to the traitor whom I gnaw, you shall see me speak and weep together. I do not know who you are, nor by what means you have come down here; but truly you do seem to me Florentine when I hear you. You have to know that I was Count Ugolino, and this is the Archbishop Ruggieri. Now I will tell you why I am such a neighbor to him. How, by effect of his ill devising, I, trusting in him, was taken and thereafter put to death, there is no need to tell;

but what you cannot have heard, that is, how cruel my death was, you shall hear and you shall know if he has wronged me.

"A narrow hole in the Mew which because of me has the title of Hunger, and in which others are yet to be shut up, had, through its opening, already shown me several moons, when I had the bad dream that rent for me the veil of the future. This man appeared to me as master and lord, chasing the wolf and the whelps upon the mountain for which the Pisans cannot see Lucca. With trained hounds, lean and eager, he had put in front of him Gualandi with Sismondi and with Lanfranchi, and after a short run the father and the sons seemed to me weary, and it seemed to me I saw their flanks ripped by the sharp fangs.

"When I awoke before the dawn I heard my children, who were with me, crying in their sleep and asking for bread. You are cruel indeed if you do not grieve already, to think what my heart was foreboding; and if you weep not, at what do you ever weep?

"They were awake now, and the hour approached when our food was usually brought to us, and each was apprehensive because of his dream. And below I heard them nailing up the door of the horrible tower; whereat I looked in the faces of my children without a word.

I did not weep, so was I turned to stone within me. They wept, and my poor little Anselm said, 'You look so, father, what ails you?' I shed no tear for that, nor did I answer all that day, nor the night after, until the next sun came forth on the world. As soon as a little ray made its way into the woeful prison, and I discerned by their four faces the aspect of my own, I bit both my hands for grief. And they, thinking I did it for hunger, suddenly rose up and said, 'Father, it will be far less painful to us if you eat of us; you did clothe us with this wretched flesh, and do you strip us of it!'

"Then I calmed myself in order not to make them sadder. That day and the next we stayed all silent: Ah, hard earth! why did you not open? When we had come to the fourth day Gaddo threw himself outstretched at my feet, saying, 'Father, why do you not help me?' There he died; and even as you see me, I saw the three fall, one by one, between the fifth day and the sixth; whence I betook me, already blind, to groping over each, and for two days I called them after they were dead. Then fasting did more than grief had done."

When he had said this, with eyes askance he again took hold of the wretched skull with his teeth, which were strong on the bone like a dog's.

Ah, Pisa! shame of the peoples of the fair land where the *sì* is heard, since your neighbors are slow to punish you, let Capraia and Gorgona shift, and make a hedge for Arno at its mouth, so that it drown every soul in you! For if Count Ugolino had the name of betraying you of your castles, you ought not to have put his children to such torture. Their youthful years, you modern Thebes, made Uguiccione and Brigata innocent, and the other two that my song names above.

We went farther on, where the frost roughly swathes another people, not bent downwards, but with faces all upturned. The very weeping there prevents their weeping, and the grief, which finds a barrier upon their eyes, turns inward to increase the agony, for the first tears form a knot and, like a crystal visor, fill all the cup beneath the eyebrow. And although, as in a callus, all feeling, because of the cold, had departed from my face, it now seemed to me as if I felt some wind, wherefore I, "Master, who moves this? Is not every vapor extinguished here below?

And he to me, "Soon shall you be where your eye itself, seeing the cause that rains down the blast, will make answer to you in this."

And one of the wretches of the cold crust cried out to us, "O souls so cruel that the last station is given to you, lift from my face the hard veils, so that, before the weeping freezes again, I may vent a little the misery that stuffs my heart." Wherefore I to him, "If you would have me help you, tell me who you are, and if I do not relieve you, may I have to go to the bottom of the ice."

He replied then, "I am Fra Alberigo; I am he of the fruits from the evil garden, and here I am paid date for fig."

"Oh," I said to him, "are you then dead already?"

And he to me, "How my body may fare in the world above I have no knowledge. Such vantage has this Ptolomea that oftentimes the soul falls down here before Atropos sends it forth; and that you may more willingly scrape the glazen tears from my face, know that as soon as the soul betrays as I did, its body is taken from it by a devil who thereafter rules it until its time has all revolved. The soul falls headlong into this cistern, and perhaps the body of the shade that is wintering here behind me still appears above on earth: you must know if you are but now come down. He is ser Branca d'Oria, and many years have passed since he was shut up thus."

"I believe you are deceiving me," I said to him, "for Branca d'Oria is not yet dead, and eats and drinks and sleeps and puts on clothes."

"In the ditch of the Malebranche above," he said, "where the sticky pitch is boiling, Michel Zanche had not yet arrived when this one left a devil in his stead in his own body, as did also a near kinsman of his who committed the treachery together with him. But now reach out your hand here: open my eyes"; and I opened them not for him—and to be rude to him was courtesy!

Ah Genoese! men strange to all good custom and full of all corruption, why are you not driven from the earth? For with the worst spirit of Romagna I found one of you who for his deeds even now is in soul bathed in Cocytus, and in body appears still alive on earth!

CANTO XXXIV

"*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni* towards us; look forward therefore," said my master, "see if you discern him." As, when a thick fog breathes, or when our hemisphere darkens to night, a mill which the wind turns appears from afar, such an edifice did I now seem to see; then, because of the wind, I drew back behind my leader, for there was no other shelter there. I was now (and with fear I do put in into verse!) where the shades were wholly covered, showing through like straw in glass. Some are lying, some are erect, this with the head, that with the soles uppermost; another, like a bow, bends his face to his feet. When we had gone so far forward that it pleased my master to show me the creature who was once so fair, he took himself from before me and made me stop, saying, "Lo Dis!—and lo the place where you must arm yourself with fortitude."

How frozen and faint I then became, ask it not, reader, for I do not write it, because all words would fail. I did not die and I did not remain alive: now think for yourself, if you have any wit, what I became, deprived alike of death and life!

The emperor of the woeful realm stood forth from mid-breast out of the ice; and I in size compare better with a giant than giants with his arms: see now how huge that whole must be to correspond to such a part. If he was once as beautiful as he is ugly now, and lifted up his brows against his Maker, well may all sorrow proceed from him. Oh how great a marvel it was to me when I saw three faces on his head: one in front and it was red, and the other two joined to this just over the middle of each shoulder, and all were joined at the crown. The right one seemed between white and yellow, and the left one was such in appearance as are those who come from whence the Nile descends. From under each there came forth two mighty wings, of size befitting such a bird—sails at sea I never saw so broad. They had no feathers, but were like a bat's. And he was flapping them, so that three winds went forth from him,

whereby Cocytus was all congealed. With six eyes he was weeping, and down over three chins dripped tears and bloody foam. In each mouth he champed a sinner with his teeth, as with a heckle, and thus he kept three of them woeful. To the one in front the biting was nothing compared with the clawing, for sometimes his back remained all stripped of skin.

"The soul up there that has the greatest punishment," said the master, "is Judas Iscariot, who has his head within and plies his legs outside. Of the other two who have their heads below, the one that hangs from the black muzzle is Brutus: see how he writhes and utters not a word; the other is Cassius, who seems so stark of limb. But night is rising again, and now we must depart, for we have seen the whole."

As was his pleasure, I clasped him round the neck, and he took advantage of time and place, and when the wings were opened wide he caught hold on the shaggy flanks; down from shag to shag he descended between the matted hair and the frozen crusts. When we had come to where the thigh turns just on the thick of the haunch, my leader with labor and strain brought round his head to where his shanks had been and grappled on the hair like one who is climbing, so that I thought we were returning into Hell again.

"Cling fast," said the master, panting like a man forspent, "for by such stairs as these we must depart from so much evil." Then he issued forth through the opening of a rock and placed me upon its edge to sit, then reached toward me his cautious step. I raised my eyes and thought to see Lucifer as I had left him, and saw him with his legs held upwards—and if I became perplexed then, let the dull crowd judge who do not see what is the point that I had passed.

"Rise to your feet," said the master. The way is long and the road is hard, and already the sun returns to mid-tierce."

It was no palace hall where we were, but a natural dungeon which had a bad floor and want of light. "Before I tear myself from the abyss, my master," I said, when I had risen, "speak to me a little, to draw me out of error. Where is the ice? And he there, how is it that he is fixed thus upside down? And how, in so brief a time, has the sun made transit from evening to morning?"

And he to me, "You imagine that you are still on the other side of the center, where I caught hold on the hair of the evil worm that pierces the world. As long as I descended you were on that side; when I turned myself you passed the point to which all weights are drawn from every part.

And you are now come beneath the hemisphere opposite to that which canopies the great dry land and underneath whose zenith the Man was slain who was born and lived without sin, and you have your feet upon a little sphere which forms the other face of the Judecca. Here it is morning when it is evening there, and this one who made a ladder for us with his hair is still fixed as he was before. On this side he fell down from Heaven; and the earth, which before stood out here, for fear of him made a veil of the sea and came to our hemisphere; and perhaps in order to escape from him that which appears on this side left here the empty space and rushed upwards."

Down there, from Beelzebub as far removed as his tomb extends, is a space not known by sight, but by the sound of a rivulet descending in it along the hollow of the rock which it has eaten out in its winding and gently sloping course. My leader and I entered on that hidden road to return into the bright world; and caring not for any rest, we climbed up, he first and I second, so far that through a round opening I saw some of the beautiful things that Heaven bears; and thence we issued forth to see again the stars.

BOOK II
PURGATORY
CANTO I

To course over better waters the little bark of my genius now hoists her sails, leaving behind her a sea so cruel; and I will sing of that second realm where the human spirit is purged and becomes fit to ascend to Heaven. But here let dead poetry rise again, O holy Muses, since I am yours; and here let Calliope rise up somewhat, accompanying my song with that strain whose stroke the wretched Pies felt so that they despaired of pardon.

Sweet hue of oriental sapphire which was gathering in the serene face of the sky, pure even to the first circle, to my eyes restored delight, as soon as I issued forth from the dead air that had afflicted my eyes and breast.

The fair planet that prompts to love was making the whole East smile, veiling the Fishes that were in her train. I turned to the right and gave heed to the other pole, and saw four stars never seen before save by the first people. The heavens seemed to rejoice in their flames. O northern widowed clime, that are deprived of beholding them!

When I had withdrawn my gaze from them, turning a little to the other pole, there whence the Wain had already disappeared, I saw close to me an old man alone, worthy in his looks of so great reverence that no son owes more to his father. His beard was long and streaked with white, like his locks of which a double tress fell on his breast. The rays of the four holy lights so adorned his face with brightness that I saw him as if the sun were before him.

"Who are you that, against the blind stream, have fled the eternal prison?" said he, moving those venerable plumes. "Who has guided you, or what was a lamp to you issuing forth from the deep night that ever makes the infernal valley black? Are the laws of the abyss thus broken? Or is some new counsel changed in Heaven that though damned you come to my rocks?"

My leader then laid hold on me, and with speech and hand and sign made reverent my legs and brow. Then he answered him, "Of myself I came not. A lady descended from Heaven through whose prayers I succored this man with my company. But since it is your will that more of our condition be unfolded to you as it truly is, mine it cannot be that to you this be denied. This man has not seen his last evening, but by his folly was so near to it that very little time was left to run. Even as I said, I was sent to him to rescue him, and there was no other way than this along which I have set myself. I have shown him all the guilty people, and now I intend to show him those spirits that purge themselves under your charge. How I have brought him would be long to tell you: from on high descends power that aids me to conduct him to see you and to hear you. Now may it please you to approve his coming. He goes seeking freedom, which is so precious, as he knows who renounces life for it; you know it, for death for its sake was not bitter to you in Utica, where you did leave the raiment which on the great day will be so bright. The eternal edicts are not violated by us, for this one is alive and Minos does not bind me; but I am of the circle where are the chaste eyes

of your Marcia, who in her look still prays you, O holy breast, that you hold her for your own. For love of her, then, incline yourself to us: let us go on through your seven realms. I will report to her your kindness, if you deign to be mentioned there below."

"Marcia so pleased my eyes while I was yonder," he then said, "that every kindness she wished of me I did. Now that she dwells beyond the evil stream no more may she move me, by the law which was made when I came forth from there. But if a lady of Heaven moves and directs you, as you say, there is no need of flattery: let it fully suffice that for her sake you ask me. Go, then, and see that you gird him with a smooth rush, and that you bathe his face so that you remove all defilement from it, for with eye dimmed by any mist it would not be fitting to go before the first minister of those of Paradise. This little island, round about its very base, down there where the wave beats it, bears rushes on its soft mud. No other plant which would put forth leaf or harden can live there, because it yields not to the buffetings. Then let not your return be this way. The sun, which is now rising, will show you where to take the mountain at an easier ascent."

So he vanished; and I rose up, without speaking, and drew all close to my leader and turned my eyes to him. "Son," he began, "follow my steps: let us turn back, for this plain slopes that way to its low limits."

The dawn was vanquishing the matin hour which fled before it, so that I recognized from afar the trembling of the sea. We were making our way across the solitary plain, like a man who returns to the road he has lost and, till he comes to it, seems to go in vain. When we came there where the dew strives with the sun, for being in a place where, in the breeze, it is little dispersed, my master gently laid both hands outspread on the grass. I therefore, aware of his purpose, reached toward him my tear-stained cheeks, and on them he wholly disclosed that color of mine which Hell had hidden.

Then we came on to the desert shore, that never saw any man navigate its waters who afterwards had experience of return. There, even as pleased another, he girded me. O marvel! that such as he plucked the humble plant, even such did it instantly spring up again, there whence he had uprooted it.

CANTO II

THE SUN had now reached the horizon whose meridian circle covers Jerusalem with its highest point; and night, circling opposite to him, was issuing forth from Ganges with the Scales, which fall from her hand when she exceeds, so that there where I was the white and rosy cheeks of fair Aurora were turning orange through too great age.

We were alongside the ocean yet, like folk who ponder on their road, who go in heart and linger in body; and lo, as when, suffused by dawn, Mars glows ruddy through the thick vapors low in the west over the ocean floor, so to me appeared—may I see it again! —a light coming over the sea so swiftly that no flight is equal to its motion;

from which when I had taken my eyes for a little in order to question my leader, I again saw it grown brighter and bigger. Then on each side of it appeared to me a something white, and from beneath it, little by little, came forth another whiteness. My master still said not a word, until the first whitenesses appeared as wings; then, when he clearly discerned the pilot, he cried, "Bend, bend your knees! Behold the angel of God! Clasp your hands: henceforth you shall see such ministers. Look how he scorns all human instruments, and will have no oar, nor other sail than his own wings between such distant shores; see how he holds them straight toward heaven, fanning the air with his eternal feathers that are not changed like mortal plumage."

Then, as the divine bird came nearer and nearer to us, the brighter did he appear, so that close up my eyes could not endure him and I cast them down; and he came on to the shore with a vessel so swift and light that the water took in naught of it. At the stern stood the celestial steersman, such, that blessedness seemed to be inscribed upon him; and within sat more than a hundred spirits. "*In exitu Israel de Aegypto*" all of them were singing together with one voice, with the rest of that psalm as it is written.

Then he made the sign of holy cross upon them, whereon they all flung themselves upon the strand, and he went away swift as he had come.

The crowd which remained there seemed strange to the place, gazing about like those who essay new things. The sun was shooting forth the day on all sides and with his deft arrows had chased Capricorn from mid-heaven, when the new people raised their faces towards us, saying to us, "If you know, show us the way up the mountain."

And Virgil answered, "Perhaps you think we are acquainted with this place; but we are pilgrims, like yourselves. We came but now, a little while before you, by another road which was so rough and hard that henceforth the climb will seem but play to us."

The souls, who had perceived from my breathing that I was yet alive, marveling grew pale; and as to a messenger who bears an olive-branch the people crowd to hear the news, and no one shows himself shy of trampling, so did all of these fortunate souls fix their eyes on my face, as though forgetting to go to make themselves fair.

I saw one of them with such great affection drawing forward to embrace me that he moved me to do the same.

O empty shades except in aspect! Three times I clasped my hands behind him and as often brought them back to my breast. Wonder, I think, was painted in my looks, whereat the shade smiled and drew back, and I, following him, pressed forward. Gently he bade me stand; then I knew who it was, and begged him that he would stay a little and talk with me.

He answered me, "Even as I loved you in my mortal body, so do I love you freed from it; therefore I stay. But you, why do you go?"

"My Casella, to return here once again where I am I make this journey," I said, "but how has so much time been taken from you?"

And he to me, "No wrong is done me if he who takes up whom and when he will has denied me this passage many times, for of a just will his own is made. Truly, for three months now he has taken with all peace whoever would embark. I, therefore, who was now turned to the seashore where the water of Tiber grows salt, was kindly gathered in by him. To that river-mouth he has now set his wings, for there the souls are always gathering that sink not down to Acheron."

And I, "If a new law does not take from you memory or practice of the songs of love which used to quiet in me all my longings,

may it please you therewith to comfort my soul somewhat, which coming hither with its body is so wearied."

"*Love that discourses in my mind*," he then began so sweetly that the sweetness still within me sounds. My master and I and that folk who were with him appeared content as if naught else touched the mind of any. We were all rapt and attentive to his notes, when lo, the venerable old man, crying, "What is this, you laggard spirits? What negligence, what stay is this? Haste to the mountain to strip off the slough that lets not God be manifest to you."

As doves, when gathering wheat or tares, assembled all at their repast and quiet, without their usual show of pride, if something appears that frightens them, suddenly leave their food because they are assailed by a greater care; so I saw that new troop leave the song and hasten toward the hillside, like one who goes, but knows not where he may come forth; nor was our departure less quick.

CANTO III

ALTHOUGH their sudden flight was scattering them over the plain, turned to the mountain where justice probes us, I drew close to my faithful companion. And how should I have sped without him? who would have brought me up the mountain? He seemed to me smitten with self-reproach. O pure and noble conscience, how bitter a sting is a little fault to you!

When his feet left off haste, which takes seemliness from every act, my mind, which at first had been restrained, widened its scope as in eager search, and I turned my face to the hill that rises highest heavenward from the sea. The sun, which was flaming red behind, was broken in front of me by the figure which was formed by the staying of its rays upon me.

I turned to my side, fearing that I was abandoned, when I saw the ground darkened before me only. And my comfort, turning full round, began to say to me, "Why do you still distrust? Do you not believe that I am with you and that I guide you? It is now evening in the place where the body is buried within which I made shadow: Naples has it, and it was taken from Brindisi. If in front of me now there is no shadow, do not marvel more than at the heavens, that one obstructs not the light from the other. To suffer torments, heat, and frost, bodies such as these that Power ordains, which wills not that the way of Its working be revealed to us. Foolish is he who hopes that our reason may compass the infinite course taken by One Substance in Three Persons. Be content, human race, with the *quia*; for if you had been able to see everything, no need was there for Mary to give birth; and you have seen desiring fruitlessly men such that their desire would have been satisfied which is given them for eternal grief: I speak of Aristotle and of Plato and of many others." And here he bent his brow and said no more, and remained troubled.

We came meanwhile to the foot of the mountain. Here we found the cliff so steep that in vain would legs be nimble there.

Between Lerici and Turbia the most deserted, the most broken landslip is a stairway easy and free compared with that.

"Now who knows on which hand the hillside slopes," said my master, staying his step, "so that he can ascend who goes without wings?" And while he held his face low, searching his mind about the road, and I was looking up around the rock, on the left appeared to me a company of souls who were moving their feet towards us and yet seemed not to approach, they came on so slowly.

"Master," said I, "lift up your eyes: behold yonder those who will give us counsel, if you cannot find it in yourself."

Then he looked, and with an air of relief replied, "Let us go thither, for they come slowly; and do you make firm your hope, dear son."

As yet that people were still as far (I mean, after a thousand paces of ours) as a good thrower would cast with his hand, when they all pressed close to the hard rocks of the steep cliff and stood still and close together, as men stop to look who are in doubt.

"O you who have made a good end, spirits already elect," Virgil began, "by that peace which, I believe, awaits you all, tell us where the mountain slopes so that it is possible to go up, for time lost irks him most who knows most."

As sheep come forth from the fold by one and two and three, and the rest stand timid, bending eyes and muzzle to the ground; and what the first does the others also do, huddling themselves to it if it stops, simple and quiet, and know not why; so saw I then the head of that happy flock move to come on, modest in countenance, in movement dignified.

When those in front saw the light broken on the ground at my right side, so that my shadow was from me to the cliff, they halted and drew back somewhat; and all the others that came after did the same, not knowing why. "Without your asking I confess to you that this is a human body which you see, whereby the light of the sun is cleft on the ground. Do not marvel, but believe that not without power which comes from Heaven does he seek to scale this wall." Thus my master. And that worthy company said, "Turn back then and go on before us," with the backs of their hands making sign. And one of them began, "Whoever you are, turn your face as you thus go: consider if ever you saw me yonder." I turned to him, and looked at him fixedly: blond he was, and handsome, and of noble mien, but a blow had cloven one of his eyebrows.

When I had humbly disclaimed ever to have seen him, he said, "Look now," and showed me a wound high on his breast, then said smiling, "I am Manfred, grandson of the Empress Constance. Therefore I beg of you that when you return you go to my fair daughter, mother of the pride of Sicily and of Aragon, and tell her the truth, if aught else be told. After I had my body pierced by two mortal stabs I gave myself weeping to Him who pardons willingly; horrible were my sins, but the Infinite Goodness has such wide arms that It receives all who turn to It. If Cosenza's pastor, who was then sent by Clement to hunt me down, had well read that page in God, the bones of my body would yet be at the bridge-head near Benevento, under the guard of the heavy cairn. Now the rain washes them and the wind stirs them, beyond the Kingdom, hard by the Verde, whither he transported them with tapers quenched. By curse of theirs none is so lost that the Eternal Love cannot return, so long as hope keeps aught of green.

True it is that whoso dies in contumacy of Holy Church, even though he repent at the last, must stay outside upon this bank thirty-fold for all the time that he has lived in his presumption, if such decree is not made shorter by holy prayers. See now if you can make me glad by revealing to my good Constance how you have seen me, as well as this ban: for much is gained here through those who are yonder."

CANTO IV

WHEN through impression of pleasure, or of pain, which some one of our faculties receives, the soul is wholly centered thereon, it seems that it gives heed to no other of its powers; and this is contrary to that error which holds that one soul above another is kindled within us; and therefore when aught is heard or seen which holds the soul strongly bent to it, the time passes away and we perceive it not, for one faculty is that which notes it, and another that which possesses the entire soul, the latter as it were bound, the former free. Of this I had true experience as I listened to that spirit and marveled; for full fifty degrees the sun had climbed and I had not perceived it, when we came to where those souls with one voice cried out to us, "Here is what you ask."

A bigger opening many a time the man of the farm hedges up with a little forkful of his thorns, when the grape is darkening,

than was the gap by which my leader mounted, and I after him, we two alone, when that troop had parted from us. One can walk to San Leo and descend to Noli, one can mount Bismantova to the summit, with feet alone; but here a man must fly, I mean with the swift wings and the plumes of great desire, behind that leader, who gave me hope and was a light to me. We were climbing within the cleft rock, and the surface on either side pressed close on us, and the ground beneath required both feet and hands.

After we were upon the upper edge of the high bank, out on the open slope, "My master," I said, "what way shall we take?" And he to me, "Let no step of yours descend, but ever up the mountain win your way behind me until some wise escort appear to us."

So high was the top that it surpassed my sight, and the slope was steeper far than a line from mid-quadrant to center. I was weary when I began, "O sweet father, turn and look how I remain alone if you do not stop!"

"My son," he said, "drag yourself up as far as here," pointing out to me a ledge a little higher up, which on that side circles all the mountain. His words so spurred me on that I forced myself to creep after him until the ledge was beneath my feet.

There we both sat down, turned towards the East whence we had climbed, for to look back that way is wont to encourage a man. I first directed my eyes to the shores below, then raised them to the sun, marveling that we were struck by it on the left side. Right well the poet perceived that I was all amazed at the chariot of the light where it was entering between us and Aquilo; wherefore he to me, "If Castor and Pollux were in company of that mirror which conducts its light up and down, you would see the ruddy Zodiac revolve yet closer to the Bears, unless it strayed from its old road. If you would conceive how this can be, concentrate within you and imagine Zion and this mountain to be so placed on the earth that they have one sole horizon and different hemispheres; then you will see that the way which Phaëthon, unhappily for him, knew not how to drive, must needs pass this mountain on the one side when it passes that mountain on the other, if your mind right clearly apprehends."

"Surely, my master," I said, "never did I see so clearly as I now discern, where my wit seemed lacking, that the mid-circle of the celestial motion, which is called the Equator in a certain science, and which lies always between the sun and the winter,

for the reason that you tell, departs here toward the north, as far as the Hebrews used to see it toward the hot climes. But, if it please you, I would fain know how far we have to go, for the hillside rises higher than my eyes can reach."

And he to me, "This mountain is such that ever at the beginning below it is toilsome, but the higher one goes the less it wearies. Therefore, when it shall seem to you so pleasant that the going up is as easy for you as going downstream in a boat, then will you be at the end of this path: hope there to rest your weariness; no more I answer, and this I know for true."

And when he had spoken these words, there sounded a voice close by, "Perhaps before then you'll need to sit!" At the sound of it each of us turned, and we saw on our left a great boulder which neither he nor I had noticed before. We went over to it, and there were persons lounging in the shade behind the rock, even as men who settle themselves to rest for laziness; and one of them, who seemed to me weary, was sitting and clasping his knees, holding his face low down between them.

"O my sweet lord," said I, "set your eye on that one who shows himself lazier than if sloth were his sister!"

Then he turned to us and gave heed, barely moving his look up along his thigh, and said, "Then you go on up who are so sturdy!"

Then I knew who he was, and that toil which still quickened my breath a little did not hinder my going to him; and when I had got to him, he scarcely lifted his head, saying, "Have you truly seen how the sun drives his chariot on your left side?"

His lazy actions and his brief words moved my lips to smile a little, then I began, "Belacqua, I am not grieved for you now; but tell me, why are you sitting here? Are you waiting for an escort? Or have you only resumed your old ways?"

And he, "O brother, what's the use of going up? For God's angel who sits at the gate would not let me pass to the torments. First must the heavens revolve around me outside it, so long as they did during my life, because I delayed good sighs until the end—unless prayer first aid me which rises from a heart that lives in grace. What avails the other, which is not heard in Heaven?"

And now the poet was climbing before me and saying, "Come on now: see, the meridian is touched by the sun, and on the shore night now sets its foot on Morocco."

CANTO V

I HAD NOW parted from those shades and was following in the steps of my leader, when one behind me, pointing his finger, cried, "See, the rays do not seem to shine on the left of him below, and he seems to bear himself like one who is alive!"

I turned my eyes at the sound of these words, and saw them gazing in astonishment at me alone, at me alone, and the light that was broken.

"Why is your mind so entangled," said the master, "that you slacken your pace? What matters to you what is whispered here? Follow me and let the people talk. Stand as a firm tower which never shakes its summit for blast of winds; for always the man in whom thought wells up on thought sets back his mark, for the one thought weakens the force of the other."

What could I answer if not, "I come"? I said it, overspread somewhat with that color which sometimes makes a man worthy of pardon.

And meanwhile across the mountain slope came people a little in front of us, singing the *Miserere* verse by verse. When they perceived that I gave no place to the passage of the rays through my body, they changed their song into an "Oh!" long and hoarse; and two of them, as messengers, ran to meet us, and asked of us, "Let us know of your condition."

And my master said, "You may go back and report to those who sent you that this man's body is true flesh. If they stopped for seeing his shadow, as I suppose, they have sufficient answer. Let them do him honor, and it may be dear to them."

Never did I see kindled vapors cleave the bright sky at early night, or August clouds at sunset, so swiftly as these returned above; and, arrived there, they with the others wheeled round towards us, like a troop that runs without curb.

"These people that press to us are many, and they come to entreat you," said the poet; "but do you continue on your way and, while going, listen."

"O soul that go to your bliss with those members with which you were born," they came crying, "stay your steps for a little;

look if you have ever seen any of us, so that you may carry news of him yonder. Ah, why do you go? Ah, why do you not stay? We were all done to death by violence, and sinners up to the last hour. Then light from Heaven made us mindful, so that, repenting and pardoning, we came forth from life at peace with God, who fills our hearts with sad longing to see Him."

And I, "Although I gaze upon your faces, I do not recognize any; but if aught that I can do be pleasing to you, spirits well-born, speak, and I will do it, by that peace which, following in the steps of such a guide, makes me pursue it from world to world."

And one began, "Each of us trusts in your good offices without your oath, if only lack of power thwart not the will; wherefore I, who speak alone before the others, do beg of you, if ever you see that country which lies between Romagna and that of Charles, that you be courteous to me with your prayers in Fano, so that holy orison be made for me, that I may purge away my grievous sins. Thence I sprang; but the deep wounds whence flowed the blood in which I had my life were dealt me in the bosom of the Antenori, there where I thought to be most secure: he of Este had it done, who held me in wrath far beyond what justice warranted;

but if I had fled toward La Mira when I was surprised at Oriaco I should yet be yonder where men breathe. I ran to the marsh, and the reeds and the mire so entangled me that I fell, and there I saw form on the ground a pool from my veins."

Then said another, "Ah, so may that desire be fulfilled which draws you up the lofty mountain, do you with gracious pity help my own. I was of Montefeltro, I am Buonconte. Giovanna, or any other, has no care for me, so that I go among these with downcast brow."

And I to him, "What force or what chance so carried you astray from Campaldino that your burial-place was never known?"

"Oh!" he answered, "at the foot of the Casentino a stream crosses, named the Archiano, which rises in the Apennines above the Hermitage. To the place where its name is lost I came, wounded in the throat, flying on foot and bloodying the plain. There I lost my sight and speech. I ended on the name of Mary, and there I fell, and my flesh remained alone. I will tell the truth, and do you repeat it among the living. The Angel of God took me, and he from Hell cried, 'O you from Heaven, why do you rob me? You carry off with you the eternal part of him for one little tear which takes him from me; but of the rest I will make other disposal!'

"You know well how in the air is condensed that moist vapor which turns to water soon as it rises where the cold seizes it. Evil will that seeks only evil he joined with intellect, and, by the power his nature gave, stirred the mists and the wind; then when day was spent, he covered with clouds the valley from Pratomagno to the great mountain chain and so charged the sky overhead that the pregnant air was turned to water. The rain fell, and that which the ground refused came to the gulleys and, gathering in great torrents, so swiftly rushed toward the royal river that nothing stayed its course. The raging Archiano found my frozen body at its mouth and swept it into the Arno and loosed the cross on my breast which I had made of me when pain overcame me. It rolled me along its banks and along its bottom, then covered and wrapped me with its spoils."

"Pray, when you have returned to the world and have rested from your long journey," the third spirit followed on the second, "remember me, who am la Pia. Siena made me, Maremma unmade me, as he knows who with his ring had plighted me to him in wedlock."

CANTO VI

WHEN THE game of hazard breaks up, the loser is left disconsolate, repeating the throws and sadly learns. With the other all the people go along: one goes in front, one plucks him from behind, and at his side one brings himself to mind. He does not stop, but listens to this one and that one; each to whom he reaches forth his hand presses on him no longer, and thus from the throng he defends himself. Such was I in that dense crowd, turning my face to them this way and that and, by promising, I got free from them. Here was the Aretine who met his death at the fierce hands of Ghino di Tacco; and the other who was drowned as he fled in the rout; here Federigo Novello was imploring with outstretched hands, and he of Pisa who made the good Marzucco show fortitude.

I saw Count Orso; and the soul severed from its body by spite and by envy, as it said, and not for fault committed, Pierre de la Brosse, I mean: and let the Lady of Brabant look to it, while she is here, so that for this she be not of the worse flock.

As soon as I was free of all those shades, whose one prayer was that others should pray, so that their way to blessedness may be sped, I began, "It seems to me, O my light, that you deny expressly in a certain passage that prayer bends the decree of heaven; and these people pray but for this—shall then their hope be vain, or are your words not rightly clear to me?"

And he to me, "My writing is plain and the hope of these souls is not fallacious, if with sound judgment you consider well; for the summit of justice is not lowered because the fire of love fulfil in a moment that which he must satisfy who sojourns here; and there where I affirmed that point, default could not be amended by prayer, because the prayer was disjoined from God. But do not rest in so profound a doubt, except she tell you who shall be a light between the truth and the intellect. I know not if you understand: I speak of Beatrice. You will see her above, smiling and happy, on the summit of this mountain."

And I, "My lord, let us go on with greater haste, for now I do not weary as before, and see how the hill now casts its shadow."

"We will go forward with this day," he answered, "as far as yet we may, but the fact is quite other than you suppose. Before you are there above you will see him return that is now hidden by the slope, so that you do not break his beams. But see yonder a soul seated all alone, who is looking towards us; he will point out to us the quickest way."

We came to him: O Lombard soul, how lofty and disdainful was your bearing, and the movement of your eyes how grave and slow! He said nothing to us, but let us go on, watching only after the fashion of a couching lion; but Virgil drew on towards him, asking him to show us the best ascent; and he did not reply to his question, but inquired of our country and condition. And the gentle leader began, "Mantua—"; and the shade, all in himself recluse, rose toward him from his place there, saying, "O Mantuan, I am Sordello of your city!"—and they embraced each other.

Ah, servile Italy, hostel of grief, ship without pilot in great tempest, no mistress of provinces, but brothel!

So eager was that noble soul, only at the sweet name of his city, to give glad welcome there to his fellow-citizen—and now in you your living abide not without war, and of those whom one wall and one moat shut in, one gnaws at the other! Search, wretched one, round the shores of your seas, and then look within your bosom, if any part of you enjoy peace! What avails it that Justinian should refit the bridle, if the saddle is empty? But for that the shame were less!

Ah, people that ought to be obedient and let Caesar sit in the saddle, if you rightly understand what God notes to you! See how this beast has grown vicious, through not being corrected by the spurs, since you did put your hand to the bridle!

O German Albert, who do abandon her that is become wanton and wild and who should bestride her saddle-bows, may just judgment fall from the stars upon your blood, and be it so strange and manifest that your successor may have fear thereof! For you and your father, held back yonder by greed, have suffered the garden of the Empire to be laid waste. Come to see Montecchi and Cappelletti, Monaldi and Filippeschi, you man without care, those already wretched and these in dread.

Come, cruel one, come and see the distress of your nobles, and heal their hurts; and you will see Santafiora, how forlorn it is. Come see your Rome that weeps, widowed and alone, crying day and night, "My Caesar, why do you abandon me?" Come see your people, how they love one another; and if no pity for us moves you, come to be shamed by your own renown!

And if it be lawful for me, O Jove supreme that on earth wast crucified for us, are Thy just eyes turned elsewhere, or is it preparation Thou makest in the depths of Thy counsel for some good quite cut off from our perception? For all the cities of Italy are full of tyrants, and every yokel who comes to play the partisan becomes a Marcellus.

O my Florence, you may indeed rejoice at this digression which does not touch you, thanks to your people who are so resourceful. Many others have justice at heart, but slowly it is let fly, because the shaft does not come without counsel to the bow; but your people has it ever on its lips! Many others refuse the public burden; but your people answers eagerly without being called, crying, "I'll shoulder it!" Now make you glad, for you have good cause: you rich, you at peace, you so wise! If I speak the truth, the result does not conceal it.

Athens and Lacedaemon, that framed the laws of old and were so grown in civil arts, offered but the merest suggestion of right living, compared with you that make such subtle provisions that what you spin in October lasts not to mid-November. How many times within your memory have you changed laws, coinage, offices, and customs, and renewed your members! And if you well bethink you, and see clear, you will see yourself like the sick woman who cannot find repose upon the down, but with her tossing seeks to ease her pain.

CANTO VII

After the courteous and joyful greetings had been repeated three and four times, Sordello drew back and said, "But who are you?"

"Before the souls worthy to ascend to God were turned to this mountain, my bones were buried by Octavian; I am Virgil, and for no other fault did I lose Heaven than for not having faith." Thus answered my leader then.

As one who of a sudden sees a thing before him that he marvels at, who believes and believes not, saying, "It is, it is not,"—such seemed the other, and then he bent down his brow and humbly approached him again and embraced him where the inferior embraces. "O glory of the Latins," said he, "through whom our tongue showed forth its power, O eternal praise of the place whence I sprang,

what merit or what favor shows you to me? If I am worthy to hear your words, tell me if you come from Hell, and from which cloister?"

"Through all the circles of the woeful kingdom," he answered him, "I have come hither. A power from Heaven moved me, and by its help I come. Not for doing, but for not doing, have I lost the sight of the high Sun that you desire and that was known by me too late. A place there is below, not sad with torments but with darkness only, where the lamentations sound not as wailings, but are sighs. There I abide with the little innocents, seized by the fangs of death before they were exempted from human guilt; there I abide with those who were not clothed with the three holy virtues, and without sin knew the others and followed all of them. But if you know and can, give us some direction whereby we may come more speedily to where Purgatory has its true beginning."

He answered, "No fixed place is set for us; it is permitted me to go up and round, and as far as I may go I will accompany you as guide. But see now how the day declines, and to go up by night is not possible, therefore it is well to take thought of a good resting-place. There are souls on the right here, apart: with your consent I will lead you to them, and not without delight will they be known to you."

"How is that?" was answered; "he who wished to climb by night, would he be hindered by others, or would he not climb because he had not the power?" And the good Sordello drew his finger on the ground, saying, "Look, even this line you would not cross after the sun is set. Not that aught else save the nocturnal darkness hinders the going up: that hampers the will with impotence. Truly by night one might return downwards, and walk wandering around the mountainside while the horizon holds the day closed."

Then my lord, as though marveling, said, "Lead us therefore whither you say we may have delight in tarrying."

We had gone from there but a little way when I perceived that the mountain was hollowed out, even as valleys hollow out mountains here. "Thither will we go," said the shade, "to where the slope makes a lap of itself, and wait there for the new day." There was a slanting path, between steep and level, which brought us to the side of that hollow, there where its edge more than half dies away. Gold and fine silver, cochineal and white lead, Indian wood bright and clear, fresh emerald at the moment it is split, would all be surpassed in color, if placed within that valley, by the grass and by the flowers growing there, as the less is surpassed by the greater.

Nature had not only painted there, but of the sweetness of a thousand scents she made there one unknown to us and blended. From there I saw, seated upon the green grass and the flowers, singing "*Salve, Regina*," souls who because of the valley were not visible from without.

"Before the lessening sun sinks to its nest," began the Mantuan who had brought us thither, "do not ask me to lead you among them there. From this bank you will distinguish better the acts and countenances of all of them, than if you were received among them on the level below. He who sits highest and has the look of having neglected what he ought to have done, and does not move his lips with the others' song, was Rudolf the Emperor, who might have healed the wounds that were the death of Italy, so that through another she is succored too late. The other, who appears to be comforting him, ruled the land where the waters spring that the Moldau carries to the Elbe, and the Elbe to the sea: his name was Ottokar, and in swaddling-bands he was better far than bearded Wenceslaus, his son, who is fed by lust and idleness. And he with the small nose, who seems close in counsel with him that has so kindly a mien, died in flight and disflowering the lily: look there how he beats his breast. See the other that, sighing, has made a bed for his cheek with the palm of his hand.

They are the father and the father-in-law of the plague of France; they know his wicked and foul life, and hence comes the grief that pierces them so. He that seems so stout of limb and who accords his singing with him of the virile nose was begirt with the cord of every worth; and if the youth who is sitting behind him had followed him as king, then indeed his worth had passed from vessel to vessel, which cannot be said of the other heirs; James and Frederick have the realms; the better heritage no one possesses. Rarely does human worth rise through the branches, and this He wills who gives it, in order that it may be asked from Him. My words apply also to the large-nosed one no less than to the other, Peter, who is singing with him, wherefore Apulia and Provence are now in grief; as much is the plant inferior to its seed as Constance yet boasts of her husband more than Beatrice and Margaret of theirs. See the king of the simple life sitting there alone, Henry of England: he in his branches has a better issue. He that sits on the ground lowest among them, looking up, is William the marquis, because of whom Alessandria and its war make Montferrat and the Canavese mourn."

CANTO VIII

It was now the hour that turns back the longing of seafaring folk and melts their heart the day they have bidden sweet friends farewell, and that pierces the new pilgrim with love if he hears from afar a bell that seems to mourn the dying day, when I began to annul my hearing and to gaze on one of the souls, uprisen, who was signing with his hand to be heard. He joined and lifted both his palms, fixing his eyes on the East, as if he said to God, "For naught else do I care." "*Te lucis ante*" came from his lips so devoutly and with such sweet notes that it rapt me from myself. Then the rest joined him sweetly and devoutly through the whole hymn, keeping their eyes fixed on the supernal wheels.

Reader, here sharpen well your eyes to the truth, for the veil is now indeed so thin that certainly to pass within is easy.

Then I saw that noble army silently gaze upward as if expectant, pallid and humble; and I saw come forth from above and descend two angels with flaming swords, broken short and deprived of their points. Their robes were green as newborn leaves, which they trailed behind them, smitten and fanned by their green wings. One came and took his stand a little above us, and the other alighted on the opposite bank, so that the company was contained in the middle. I clearly discerned their blond heads, but in their faces my sight was dazzled, like a faculty confounded by excess.

"Both come from Mary's bosom," said Sordello, "to guard the valley, because of the serpent that will presently come." Whereat I, who knew not by what path, turned round all chilled and pressed close to the trusty shoulders. And Sordello continued, "Let us go down into the valley among the great shades, and we will speak with them: it will be well pleasing to them to see you."

I believe I descended but three steps and was below, and saw one who was gazing only at me, as if he would recognize me. It was now the time when the air was darkening, yet not so dark that it did not make plain between his eyes and mine what it had shut off before.

He moved toward me and I toward him: noble Judge Nino, how I rejoiced to see you there, and not among the damned! No fair salutation was silent between us; then he asked, "How long is it since you came to the foot of the mountain over the far waters?"

"Oh," I said to him, "from within the woeful places I came this morning, and I am in my first life, albeit by this my journeying I gain the other." And when they heard my answer, Sordello and he drew back like folk suddenly bewildered, the one to Virgil and the other turned to one who was seated there, crying, "Up, Currado, come see what God, of His grace, has willed!" Then, turning to me, "By that singular gratitude you owe to Him who so hides His primal purpose that there is no fording thereunto, when you are beyond the wide waters, tell my Giovanna that she pray for me there where the innocent are heard. I do not think her mother loves me longer since changing her white wimples which she, in her wretchedness, needs must yet long for. By her right easily may be known how long the fire of love lasts in woman, if eye or touch do not often kindle it. The viper that leads afield the Milanese will not make her so fair a tomb as Gallura's cock would have done."

Thus he spoke, his aspect stamped with the mark of that righteous zeal which in due measure glows in the heart.

My greedy eyes kept going to the sky just where the stars are slowest, as in a wheel nearest the axle. And my leader, "Son, what are you gazing at up there?" And I to him, "At those three torches with which the pole here is all aflame." And he to me, "The four bright stars you saw this morning are low on the other side, and these are risen where those were."

As he was speaking, lo! Sordello drew him to himself, saying, "See there our adversary!" and pointed with his finger that he should look that way. At that part where the little valley has no rampart was a snake, perhaps such as gave to Eve the bitter food. Through the grass and the flowers came the evil streak, turning from time to time its head and licking its back like a beast that sleeks itself. I did not see and therefore cannot tell how the celestial falcons moved, but well did I see both one and the other in motion. Hearing the green wings cleave the air, the serpent fled; and the angels wheeled round, flying alike back up to their posts.

The shade that had drawn close to the judge when he exclaimed, through all that assault had not for an instant loosed his gaze from me.

"So may the light that leads you on high find in your will as much wax as is needed up to the enamelled summit," he began, "if you know true news of Val di Magra or of the neighboring region, tell it to me, who once was great there. I was called Currado Malaspina: I am not the old Currado, but from him I am descended. To my own I bore the love that is refined here."

"Oh," said I to him, "through your lands I have never been, but where do men dwell in all Europe that they are not renowned? The fame that honors your house proclaims alike its lords and its district, so that he knows of them who has never been there; and I swear to you, so may I go above, that your honored race does not strip itself of the glory of the purse and of the sword. Custom and nature so privilege it, that though the wicked head turn the world awry, it alone goes right and scorns the evil path."

And he, "Now go, for the sun shall not lie seven times in the bed that the Ram covers and bestrides with all four feet before this courteous opinion will be nailed in the midst of your head, with stronger nails than men's talk, if course of judgment be not stayed."

CANTO IX

THE CONCUBINE of old Tithonus was now showing white on the balcony of the East, forth from her sweet lover's arms; her forehead was glittering with gems, set in the form of the cold animal that strikes men with its tail. And in the place where we were night had taken two of the steps with which she climbs, and already the third was bending down its wings when I, who had somewhat of Adam with me, being overcome with sleep, lay me down on the grass there where all five of us were already seated.

At the hour near morning when the swallow begins her sad lays, perhaps in memory of her former woes, and when our mind, more a pilgrim from the flesh and less captive to thoughts, is in its visions almost divine,

I seemed to see, in a dream, an eagle poised in the sky, with feathers of gold, its wings outspread, and prepared to swoop. And I seemed to be in the place where Ganymede abandoned his own company, when he was caught up to the supreme consistory; and I thought within myself, "Perhaps it is wont to strike only here, and perhaps disdains to carry anyone upward in its claws from any other place." Then it seemed to me that, having wheeled a while, it descended terrible as a thunderbolt and snatched me upwards as far as the fire: there it seemed that it and I burned; and the imagined fire so scorched me that perforce my sleep was broken.

Even as Achilles started up, turning his awakened eyes about him and not knowing where he was, when his mother carried him off, sleeping in her arms, from Chiron to Skyros, whence later the Greeks took him away; so did I start, as soon as sleep fled from my face, and I grew pale, like one who is chilled with terror. My comfort was alone beside me, and the sun was already more than two hours high, and my face was turned to the sea.

"Have no fear," said my lord, "take confidence, for all is well with us; do not hold back, but put forth all your strength.

You are now arrived at Purgatory: see the cliff there that encloses it about; see the entrance there where it appears cleft. A while ago, in the dawn that precedes the day, when your soul was sleeping within you, upon the flowers that adorn the place down there, came a lady who said, 'I am Lucy; let me take this man who is sleeping, so will I speed him on his way.' Sordello remained, and the other noble souls. She took you, and when the day was bright she went on upwards and I in her steps. Here she laid you down; but first her beautiful eyes showed me that open entrance; then she and slumber together went away."

Like a perplexed man who is reassured, whose fear changes to confidence when the truth is revealed to him, so I was changed; and when my leader saw me free from care he moved on up the slope, and I behind him, toward the height.

You see well, reader, that I uplift my theme: do not wonder, therefore, if I sustain it with greater art.

We drew near and came to a point from which, where at first there appeared to be merely a break, like a fissure that divides a wall, I saw a gate, with three steps beneath for going up to it, of different colors, and a warder who as yet spoke not a word.

And as I looked more and more intently I saw that he was seated upon the topmost step, and in his face he was such that I endured it not. In his hand he had a naked sword, which so reflected the rays on us that often in vain I directed my eyes upon it.

"Say from there, what is it you seek?" he began to say; "Where is the escort? Take care lest the coming upward be to your hurt."

"A heavenly lady who knows these things well," my master answered him, "said to us just now: 'Go that way, there is the gate.'"

"And may she speed your steps to good!" began again the courteous doorkeeper; "Come forward, then, to our stairs."

We then came on, and the first step was white marble so polished and clear that I mirrored myself in it in my true likeness; the second was darker than perse and was of a stone rugged and burnt, cracked in its length and in its breadth. The third, which lies massy above, seemed to me of porphyry as flaming red as blood that spurts from a vein. Upon this step the angel of God held both his feet, seated upon the threshold that seemed to me to be of adamant. Up by the three steps, with my good will, my leader drew me, saying, "Beg him humbly that he withdraw the bolt."

I threw myself devoutly at the holy feet; I besought for mercy's sake that he would open to me, but first I smote three times upon my breast. Seven P's he traced on my forehead with the point of his sword and said, "See that you wash away these wounds when you are within."

Ashes, or earth that is dug out dry, would be of one color with his vesture, and from beneath it he drew two keys, the one of gold and the other of silver. First with the white and then with the yellow he did so to the gate that I was content.

"Whenever one of these keys fails so that it does not turn rightly in the lock," he said to us, "this passage does not open. The one is more precious; but the other requires great skill and wisdom before it will unlock, for this is the one that disentangles the knot. From Peter I hold them, and he told me to err rather in opening than in keeping shut, if but the people prostrate themselves at my feet." Then he pushed open the door of the sacred portal, saying, "Enter; but I bid you know that he who looks back returns outside again."

When the pivots of that sacred portal, which are of metal resounding and strong, were turned within their hinges, Tarpea roared not so loud nor showed itself so stubborn, when the good Metellus was taken from it, leaving it lean thereafter.

I turned attentive to the first note, and "*Te Deum laudamus*" I seemed to hear in a voice mingled with the sweet music. What I heard gave me the same impression we sometimes get when people are singing with an organ, and now the words are clear and now are not.

CANTO X

WHEN we were within the threshold of the gate which the souls' wrong love disuses, making the crooked way seem straight, I heard by its resounding that it was closed again; and if I had turned my eyes to it, what would have been a fitting excuse for my fault?

We were climbing through a cleft in the rock, which kept bending one way and the other, like a wave that goes and comes. "Here must we use a little skill," my leader began, "in keeping close, now here, now there, to the side that recedes." And this made our steps so scant that the waning orb of the moon had regained its bed to sink to rest before we came forth from that needle's eye. But when we were free and out in the open above, where the mountain draws back, I weary and each of us uncertain of our way, we stopped on a level place more solitary than roads through deserts.

From its edge, bordering the void, to the foot of the high bank which rises sheer, a human body would measure in three lengths; and as far as my eye could make its flight, now on the left and now on the right, such this terrace seemed to me. Not yet had we moved our feet on it when I perceived that the encircling bank (which, being vertical, lacked means of ascent) was of pure white marble, and was adorned with such carvings that not only Polycletus but Nature herself would there be put to shame.

The angel who came to earth with the decree of peace, wept for since many a year, which opened Heaven from its long ban, before us there appeared so vividly graven in gentle mien that it seemed not a silent image: one would have sworn that he was saying, "*Ave*," for there she was imaged who turned the key to open the supreme love, and these words were imprinted in her attitude: "*Ecce ancilla Dei*," as expressly as a figure is stamped on wax.

"Do not keep your mind on one part only," said the sweet master, who had me on the side where people have their heart; wherefore I moved my eyes and saw beyond Mary, on the same side as was he who prompted me,

another story set in the rock; wherefore I went past Virgil and drew near to it, that it might be displayed before my eyes. There, carved in the same marble, were the cart and the oxen drawing the holy ark, because of which men fear an office not given in charge. In front appeared people, and all the company, divided into seven choirs, made two of my senses say, the one "No," the other, "Yes, they are singing." In like manner, by the smoke of the incense that was imaged there my eyes and nose were made discordant with *yes* and *no*. There, preceding the blessed vessel, dancing girt up, was the humble Psalmist, and on that occasion he was both more and less than king. Opposite, figured at a window of a great palace, was Michal looking on, like a woman vexed and scornful.

I moved my feet from where I was to examine close at hand another story which I saw gleaming white beyond Michal. There storied was the high glory of the Roman prince whose worth moved Gregory to his great victory: I mean the Emperor Trajan. And a poor widow was at his bridle in attitude of weeping and of grief. Round about him appeared a trampling and throng of horsemen, and above them the eagles in gold moved visibly in the wind.

Among all these the poor woman seemed to say, "My lord, do me vengeance for my son who is slain, wherefore my heart is pierced." And he seemed to answer her, "Wait now till I return." And she, "My lord," like one whose grief is urgent, "and if you do not return?" And he, "He who shall be in my place will do it for you." And she, "What shall another's welldoing avail you, if you forget your own?" He then, "Now take comfort, for I must discharge my duty before I go: justice requires it, and pity bids me stay."

He who never beheld any new thing wrought this visible speech, new to us because here it is not found.

While I was taking delight in gazing on the images of humilities so great, and for their Craftsman's sake precious to behold, "Lo, here are many people," murmured the poet, "but they come with slow step: they will direct us on to the high stairs." My eyes, which were content to behold novelties whereof they are fain, were not slow in turning towards him.

But, reader, I would not have you turned from good resolution for hearing how God wills the debt shall be paid. Heed not the form of the pain: think what follows, think that at the worst beyond the great Judgment it cannot go.

"Master," I began, "what I see moving towards us does not seem to me persons, but what it is I do not know, my sight wanders so." And he to me, "The grievous condition of their torment doubles them to the ground, so that my own eyes at first had contention therewith. But look closely there and with your sight disentangle that which comes beneath those stones: already you may discern how each beats his breast."

O proud Christians, wretched and weary, who, sick in mental vision, put trust in backward steps: are you not aware that we are worms, born to form the angelic butterfly that flies unto judgment without defenses? Why does your mind soar up aloft, since you are as it were imperfect insects, even as the worm in which full form is wanting?

As for corbel to support a ceiling or a roof, sometimes a figure is seen to join the knees to the breast—which, unreal, begets real distress in one who sees it—so fashioned did I see these when I gave good heed. They were truly more or less contracted according as they had more and less upon their backs; and he who showed the most suffering in his looks, seemed to say, weeping, "I can no more."

CANTO XI

"OUR FATHER, who art in Heaven, not circumscribed, but through the greater love Thou hast for Thy first works on high,

"Praisèd be Thy name and Thy worth by every creature, as it is meet to render thanks to Thy sweet effluence.

"May the peace of Thy kingdom come to us, for we cannot reach it of ourselves, if it come not, for all our striving.

"As Thine angels make sacrifice to Thee of their will, singing Hosanna, so let men make of theirs.

"Give us this day our daily manna, without which he backward goes through this harsh desert who most labors to advance.

"And as we forgive everyone the wrong we have suffered, even do Thou in loving-kindness pardon, and regard not our desert.

"Our strength, which is easily overcome, put not to trial with the old adversary, but deliver us from him, who so spurs it.

"This last petition, dear Lord, we make not now for ourselves, for there is no need, but for those who remain behind us."

Thus, praying good speed for themselves and for us, those shades were going under the burden, like that of which one sometimes dreams, unequally anguished all of them, wearily making their rounds on the first terrace, purging away the mists of the world. If there they always ask good for us, what for them can here be said or done, by those who have their will rooted in good? Truly we ought to help them wash away the stains they have borne hence, so that pure and light they may go forth to the starry wheels.

"Ah, so may justice and pity soon disburden you, that you may spread your wing which may uplift you according to your desire, show us on which hand we may go most quickly to the stair; and if there is more than one passage, show us that which is least steep, for he who comes with me here, for the burden of Adam's flesh wherewith he is clothed, against his will is slow at climbing up."

It was not plain from whom came the words that were returned to these my leader had spoken,

but they were, "Come with us to the right along this bank, and you will find the opening where it is possible for a living man to climb. And were I not hindered by the stone that subdues my proud neck, so that I must hold my face down, I would look at this man who is yet alive and is not named, to see if I know him, and make him piteous of this burden. I was Italian, the son of a great Tuscan: Guiglielmo Aldobrandesco was my father; I know not if his name was ever with you. The ancient blood and the gallant deeds of my ancestors made me so arrogant that, not thinking of our common mother, I held all men in such exceeding scorn that it was the death of me, as the Sienese know and every child in Campagnatico knows. I am Omberto; and not only to me does pride work ill, but it has dragged all my kinsfolk with it into calamity; and for this I must bear this weight, until God is satisfied, here among the dead, since I did it not among the living."

Listening, I bent down my face; and one of them, not he who spoke, twisted himself beneath the weight that encumbers them, and saw me and knew me, and was calling out, trying hard to keep his eyes fixed on me who all stooping went along with them.

"Oh," I said to him, "are you not Oderisi, the honor of Gubbio and the honor of that art which in Paris is called 'illumination'?"

"Brother," he said," more smiling are the pages that Franco Bolognese paints: the honor is now all his—and mine in part. Truly I should not have been so courteous while I lived, because of the great desire for excellence whereon my heart was set. For such pride the fee is paid here; nor should I yet be here, were it not that, having power to sin, I turned to God. O empty glory of human powers! how briefly lasts the green upon the top, if it is not followed by barbarous times! Cimabue thought to hold the field in painting, and now Giotto has the cry, so that the other's fame is dim; so has the one Guido taken from the other the glory of our tongue—and he perchance is born that shall chase the one and the other from the nest. Earthly fame is naught but a breath of wind, which now comes hence and now comes thence, changing its name because it changes quarter. What greater fame will you have if you strip off your flesh when it is old than if you had died before giving up *pappo* and *dindi,* when a thousand years shall have passed, which is a shorter space compared to the eternal than the movement of the eyelids to that circle which is slowest turned in heaven?

With him who moves so slowly along the way in front of me all Tuscany resounded, and now there is scarcely a whisper of him in Siena, whereof he was lord when the rage of Florence was destroyed, which was as proud then as it is prostitute now. Your repute is as the hue of grass, which comes and goes, and he discolors it through whom it springs green from the ground."

And I to him, "Your true words fill my heart with good humility and abate in me a great swelling; but who is he of whom you just now spoke?"

"He is Provenzan Salvani," he answered, "and he is here because, in his presumption, he thought to bring all Siena into his grasp. Thus has he gone and thus he goes without rest, since he died: such coin does he pay in satisfaction who yonder is too daring."

And I, "If the spirit that awaits the verge of life before he repents abides there below and mounts not up here, unless holy prayers assist him, until as much time passes as he has lived, how was it granted him to come up here?"

"When he was living with greatest glory," said he, "he stationed himself of his own free will in the marketplace of Siena, putting away all shame; and there, to deliver his friend from the pains he was suffering in Charles' prison, he brought himself to tremble in every vein.

No more will I say, and I know that I speak darkly; but, short time will pass before your neighbors shall so act that you will be able to interpret this: such a deed released him from those confines."

CANTO XII

SIDE BY SIDE, like oxen that go yoked, I went on beside that burdened soul, as long as the gentle teacher allowed it; but when he said, "Leave him and press on, for here it is well that with sail and oars each urge his bark along with all his might," I raised my body erect again as one should walk, though my thoughts remained bowed down and shrunken.

I had set out and was gladly following in my master's steps and both of us were now showing how light of foot we were, and he said to me, "Turn down your eyes: it will be well for you to solace your way by seeing the bed beneath your feet."

As, in order that there be memory of them, the stones in the church floor over the buried dead bear figured what they were before;

wherefore many a time men weep for them there, at the prick of memory that spurs only the faithful: so I saw sculptured there, but of better semblance in respect of skill, all that for pathway juts out from the mountain.

I saw, on the one side, him who was created nobler than any other creature fall as lightning from heaven.

I saw Briareus, on the other side, pierced by the celestial bolt, lying heavy on the ground in mortal chill.

I saw Thymbraeus, I saw Pallas and Mars, still armed, around their father, gazing on the scattered limbs of the giants.

I saw Nimrod at the foot of his great labor, as if bewildered; and there looking on were the people who were proud with him in Shinar.

O Niobe, with what grieving eyes did I see you traced on the roadway between seven and seven children slain!

O Saul, how upon your own sword did you appear there dead on Gilboa, which never thereafter felt rain or dew!

O mad Arachne, so did I see you already half spider, wretched on the shreds of the work which to your own hurt was wrought by you!

O Rehoboam, there your image does not seem to threaten now, but a chariot bears it off full of terror, and no one is in pursuit!

It showed also, that hard pavement, how Alcmaeon made the luckless ornament seem costly to his mother.

It showed how his sons fell upon Sennacherib within the temple, and how they left him there slain.

It showed the destruction and the cruel slaughter which Tomyris wrought when she said to Cyrus, "You did thirst for blood, and with blood I fill you."

It showed how the Assyrians fled in the rout, when Holofernes was slain, and also the remains of that slaughter.

I saw Troy in ashes and in caverns: O Ilion, how cast down and vile it showed you—the sculpture which is there discerned!

What master was he of brush or of pencil who drew the forms and lineaments which there would make every subtle genius wonder? Dead the dead, and the living seemed alive. He who saw the reality of all I trod upon, while I went bent down, saw not better than I!

Now wax proud, and on with haughty visage, you children of Eve, and bend not down your face to see your evil path!

Already more of the mountain was circled by us and much more of the sun's course was sped than my mind, not free, had reckoned, when he who was always looking ahead as he went began, "Lift up your head, there is now no more time for going thus absorbed.

See there an angel who is making ready to come towards us. See how the sixth handmaiden is returning from the service of the day. Adorn with reverence your bearing and your face, that it may please him to send us upward. Remember that this day will never dawn again."

Right well was I used to his admonitions never to lose time, so that in that matter his speech could not be dark to me.

The fair creature came towards us, clothed in white and such in his face as seems the tremulous morning star. He opened his arms and then spread his wings and said, "Come: the steps are at hand here, and henceforth the climb is easy. To this bidding there are very few that come: O race of men, born to fly upward, why do you fall so at a breath of wind?"

He brought us where the rock is cleft: there he struck his wings across my forehead and then promised me safe journeying. As on the right hand, for climbing the hill where stands the church above Rubaconte that dominates the well-guided city the bold scarp of the ascent is broken by the stairs which were made in a time when the record and the stave were safe, so the bank that falls there very steeply from the other circle is made easier, but the high rock presses close on this side and on that.

As we were turning our steps there, "*Beati pauperes spiritu*" was sung so sweetly as no words would tell. Ah, how different these passages from those of Hell, for here the entrance is with songs, and down there with fierce laments.

Now we were mounting by the holy stairs, and it seemed to me I was far lighter than before, on the level; wherefore I said, "Master, tell me, what weight has been lifted from me that I feel almost no weariness as I go on?" He answered, "When the P's that are still left on your brow all but effaced shall be, as one is, quite erased, your feet shall be so conquered by good will that not only will they not feel fatigue, but it will be a delight to them to be urged upwards."

Then did I like those who go with something on their head unknown to them, save that the signs of others make them suspect, so that the hand lends its aid to make sure, and searches and finds, fulfilling the office which sight cannot accomplish; and with the spread fingers of my right hand I found only six of the letters that he of the keys had traced on my temples: and observing this my leader smiled.

CANTO XIII

We were now at the top of the stairway where a second time the mountain is cut away which, by our ascent of it, frees us from evil. There a terrace girds the hill around, like the first, except that its arc makes a sharper curve. No figure is there, nor any image that may be seen, but only the bank and the bare road and the livid color of the stone.

"If to inquire one waits for people here," the poet was saying, "I fear that perhaps our choice may be delayed too long." Then he set his eyes fixedly on the sun, made of his right side a center for his movement, and brought round his left. "O sweet light, by trust in which I enter on this new road, do you guide us," he said, "with the guidance that is needful in this place.

You warm the world, you shed light upon it: if other reason urge not to the contrary, your beams must ever be our guide."

As far as here is counted for a mile, even so far there had we now gone, in but short time, because of ready will; and flying towards us were heard, but not seen, spirits uttering courteous invitations to the table of love. The first voice that passed flying, called out loudly, "*Vinum non habent,*" and passed on behind us repeating it; and before it had become wholly inaudible through distance, another passed, crying, "I am Orestes," and also did not stay.

"O father," said I, "what voices are these?" and even as I was asking, lo! the third voice saying, "Love them from whom you have suffered wrong." And my good master, "This circle scourges the sin of envy, and therefore from love the cords of the whip are drawn. The curb must be of the opposite sound: I think you will hear it, as I judge, before you come to the pass of pardon. But fix your eyes full steadily through the air and you will see people sitting there in front of us, and each is seated against the rock." Then more than before I opened my eyes: I looked in front of me and saw shades with cloaks not different in color from the stone.

And when we were a little farther on, I heard cries of, "Mary, pray for us!" then "Michael" and "Peter" and "All Saints."

I do not believe there goes on earth today a man so hard that he would not have been pierced with pity at what I saw then, for when I had come so near that their condition came to me distinct, great grief was wrung from my eyes. They appeared to be covered with coarse haircloth, and one supported the other with his shoulder, and all were supported by the bank. Even so the blind who are destitute take their place at pardons to beg for their needs; and one sinks his head on the other, so that pity may quickly be awakened in others, not only by the sound of their words, but by their appearance, which pleads not less. And even as the sun profits not the blind, so to the shades in the place I speak of, heaven's light denies its bounty, for all their eyelids an iron wire pierces and stitches up, even as is done to an untamed hawk because it stays not quiet.

It seemed to me that I did them wrong as I went my way, seeing others, not being seen myself; wherefore I turned to my wise counsel. Well knew he what the dumb would say, and therefore did not wait for my question, but said, "Speak, and be brief and to the point."

Virgil was coming with me on that side of the terrace from which one could fall, since no parapet surrounds it; and on the other side of me were the devout shades that through the horrible seam were pressing out the tears that bathed their cheeks. I turned to them, and began, "O people assured of seeing the light on high which alone is the object of your desire, so may grace soon clear the scum of your conscience that the stream of memory may flow down through it pure, tell me, for it will be gracious and dear to me, if there is any soul here among you that is Italian—and perhaps it will be well for him if I know of it."

"O my brother, each one here is a citizen of a true city: but you mean one that lived in Italy while a pilgrim." This I seemed to hear for answer somewhat farther on from where I was, wherefore I made myself heard yet more that way; and among the rest I saw a shade that looked expectant, and if any would ask how, it was lifting up its chin in the manner of the blind.

"Spirit," I said, "who subdue yourself in order to ascend, if it be you who answered me, make yourself known to me either by place or name."

"I was of Siena," it replied, "and with these others here I mend my sinful life, weeping to Him, that He may grant himself to us.

Sapient I was not, although Sapia was my name; and at others' hurt I rejoiced far more than at my own good fortune. But lest you think that I deceive you, hear if I was not mad, as I tell you, when I was already descending the arc of my years. My townsmen had joined battle near Colle with their adversaries, and I prayed God for that which He had willed: there were they routed and turned back in the bitter steps of flight; and, seeing the chase, I was filled with joy beyond all bounds, so much that I turned upwards my impudent face, crying out to God, 'Now I fear Thee no more,' as the blackbird did for a little fair weather. I sought peace with God on the brink of my life, and my debt would not yet be reduced by penitence, had not Pier Pettinaio remembered me in his holy prayers, who in his charity did grieve for me. But who are you that go asking of our condition and bear your eyes unsewn, as I believe, and breathing do speak?"

"My eyes," I said, "will yet be taken from me here, but for short time only, because they have little offended with looks of envy. Far greater is the fear that holds my soul in suspense, of the torment below, so that already the load down there is heavy upon me."

And she to me, "Who then has led you up here among us, if you think to return below?"

And I, "He that is with me here and is silent; and I am alive, and do you therefore ask of me, spirit elect, if you would that yonder I should yet move my mortal feet for you."

"Oh, this is so strange a thing to hear," she answered, "that it is a great token of God's love for you. Therefore help me sometimes with your prayers. And I pray you by all you most desire that, if ever you tread the soil of Tuscany, you restore my name among my kindred. You will see them among that vain people who put their trust in Talamone, and will lose more hope there than in finding the Diana—but there the admirals will lose the most."

CANTO XIV

"WHO IS this that circles our mountain before death has given him flight, and opens and shuts his eyes at will?"

"I know not who he is, but I know he is not alone. Question him, since you are nearer, and greet him kindly, that he may speak."

Thus two spirits, leaning towards each other, were discoursing of me there on my right; then they turned up their faces to speak to me, and one of them said, "O soul that, still fixed in your body, go on toward Heaven, for charity console us and tell us whence you come and who you are: for you make us marvel so greatly at the grace that is given you as needs must something that never was before."

And I, "Through mid-Tuscany there winds a little stream that rises in Falterona, and a course of a hundred miles does not suffice for it.

From its banks I bring this body. To tell you who I am would be to speak in vain, for my name as yet makes no great sound."

"If I rightly penetrate your meaning," he that had spoken first then answered me, "you speak of the Arno."

And the other said to him, "Why did he conceal that river's name, even as one does some horrible thing?"

And the shade that was questioned acquitted himself thus, "I do not know, but it is fitting indeed that the name of such a valley should perish, for from its source (where the rugged mountain-chain from which Pelorus is cut off so teems with water that in few places is it surpassed) down to where it yields itself to replace that which the sky draws up from the sea, whence rivers have that which flows in them, virtue is fled from as an enemy by all, as if it were a snake, either through some misfortune of the place or from evil habit that goads them; wherefore the dwellers in the wretched valley have so changed their nature that it seems as though Circe had them at pasture. Among filthy hogs, fitter for acorns than for any food made for human use, it first directs its feeble course. Then, coming lower, it finds curs more snarling than their power warrants, and from them it scornfully turns away its snout.

It goes on falling, and the more it swells the more does the accursed and ill-fated ditch find the dogs turned to wolves. Then, after descending through many a deep gorge, it finds foxes so full of fraud that they have no fear that any trap may take them. Nor will I refrain from speech because another hears me (and it will be well for him if he keep in mind that which true prophecy discloses to me). I see your grandson who becomes a hunter of those wolves on the bank of the savage stream, and he strikes them all with terror; he sells their flesh still living, then slaughters them like worn-out cattle: many he deprives of life, himself of honor. Bloody he comes forth from the dismal wood: he leaves it such that in a thousand years from now it will not rewood itself as it was before."

As at the announcement of grievous ills the face of him who listens is troubled, from whatsoever side the danger may assail him, so I saw the other soul, who had turned to hear, become disturbed and sad, when it had taken in these words.

The speech of the one and the look of the other made me desire to know their names, and urgently I questioned them; wherefore the spirit who had spoken to me before began again, "You would have me consent to do for you what you will not for me;

but since God wills that so much grace of His shine forth in you, I will not be chary with you; know therefore that I was Guido del Duca. My blood was so inflamed with envy that if I had seen a man become glad you would have seen me suffused with lividness. Of my sowing I reap such straw: O human race, why do you set your hearts where there must be exclusion of partnership?

"This is Rinieri, this is the glory and the honor of the house of Calboli, where none since has made himself heir to his worth. And not his blood alone, between the Po and the mountains and the sea and the Reno, has been stripped of the virtues required for earnest and for pastime, for within these bounds the land is so choked with poisonous growths that tardily would they now be rooted out by tillage. Where is the good Lizio and Arrigo Mainardi, Pier Traversaro and Guido di Carpigna? O men of Romagna turned to bastards! When will a Fabbro take root again in Bologna? when in Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco, noble scion of a lowly plant? Marvel not, Tuscan, if I weep when I remember Guido da Prata, and Ugolin d'Azzo who lived among us, Federigo Tignoso and his company, the Traversaro house and the Anastagi—the one family and the other now without an heir—

the ladies and the knights, the toils and the sports to which love and courtesy moved us, there where hearts have become so wicked! O Bretinoro, why do you not flee away, now that your family has departed, with many another, in order to escape corruption? Bagnacaval does well that gets no sons; and Castrocaro ill, and Conio worse, that yet troubles to beget such counts. The Pagani will do well, when their Devil takes himself off, but not so that unsullied witness shall ever be left of them. O Ugolin de' Fantolini, your name is safe, since no more are looked for who might blacken it by degeneracy. But, Tuscan, go on your way now, for it now pleases me far more to weep than to talk, so has our discourse wrung my heart."

We knew that those dear souls heard us go, therefore by their silence they made us confident of the way. After we were left alone and were journeying on, a voice like lightning when it cleaves the air came counter to us, saying, "Everyone that finds me shall slay me," and fled like thunder that rolls away, if suddenly the cloud is rent. As soon as our hearing had respite from it, lo, the other with so loud a crash that it was like a thunderclap that follows quickly,

"I am Aglauros that was turned to stone"; and then, to draw close to the poet I made a step to the right, not forward.

The air was now quiet on every side; and he said to me, "That was the hard bit which should hold man within his bounds: but you take the bait, so that the old adversary's hook draws you to him, and therefore little avails curb, or lure. The heavens call to you and circle about you, displaying to you their eternal splendors, and your eyes gaze only on the earth: wherefore He smites you who sees all."

CANTO XV

As much as between the end of the third hour and the beginning of the day appears of the sphere that is always playing like a child, so much now appeared to be left of the sun's course toward nightfall: it was evening there and here it was midnight. And the beams were striking us full in the face, for the mountain was now so far circled by us that we were going straight toward the sunset, when I felt my brow weighed down by the splendor far more than before, and the things not known were a wonder to me. Wherefore I lifted my hands above my eyebrows and made for me the shade that lessens excess of light.

As when the beam leaps from the water or the mirror to the opposite quarter, rising at the same angle

as it descends, and at equal distance departs as much from the line of the falling stone, even as experiment and science show; so it seemed to me that I was struck by light reflected there in front of me, from which my sight was quick to flee.

"What is that, gentle father," I said, "from which I cannot screen my eyes so that it may avail me, and which seems to be moving towards us?"

"Do not marvel if the family of Heaven still dazzles you," he answered me; "this is a messenger that comes to invite to the ascent. Soon will it be that the seeing of these will not be hard for you, but as great a delight as nature has fitted you to feel."

When we had reached the blessed angel, with a glad voice he said, "Enter here to a stairway far less steep than the others."

We were mounting, having already departed thence, and "*Beati misericordes*" was sung behind, and "Rejoice, you that overcome."

My master and I, we two alone, were journeying upward, and I thought as we went to gain profit from his words, and I turned to him and asked, "What did the spirit of Romagna mean when he spoke of 'exclusion' and 'partnership'?" Whereupon he to me, "Of his own worst fault he knows the harm, and therefore it is little wonder if he reprove it, that it may be less mourned for.

Because your desires are centered there where the portion is lessened by partnership, envy moves the bellows to your sighs. But if the love of the highest sphere turned upwards your desire, that fear would not be at your heart. For there, the more they are who say 'ours,' the more of good does each possess, and the more of charity burns in that cloister."

"I am more hungering to be satisfied," I said, "than if I had at first been silent, and more of doubt do I assemble in my mind. How can it be that a good distributed can make more possessors richer with itself than if it is possessed by a few?"

And he to me, "Because you still set your mind on earthly things, you gather darkness from true light. That infinite and ineffable Good that is there above speeds to love as a ray of light comes to a bright body. So much it gives of itself as it finds of ardor, so that how far soever love extends, the more does the Eternal Goodness increase upon it; and the more souls there are that are enamored there above, the more there are for loving well, and the more love is there, and like a mirror one reflects to the other. And if my discourse does not appease your hunger, you shall see Beatrice and she will deliver you wholly from this and every other longing.

Strive only that soon may be erased, as are the other two already, the five wounds, which are healed by being painful."

As I was about to say, "You satisfy me," I saw that I had reached the next circle, so that my eager eyes held me silent. There I seemed suddenly to be caught up in an ecstatic vision and to see persons in a temple, and a woman about to enter, with the tender attitude of a mother, saying "My son, why have you done so to us? Behold your father and I sought you, sorrowing"; and as she was silent, that which first appeared was there no more.

Then there appeared to me another woman, with those waters streaming down her cheeks that grief distills when it arises from great resentment against another, and she was saying, "If you are lord of the city for whose name was so great strife among the gods, and whence all knowledge sparkles, avenge you of those daring arms which embraced our daughter, O Pisistratus!" And her lord seemed to me kindly and gently to answer her, with placid mien, "What shall we do to one who desires ill to us, if he who loves us is condemned by us?"

Then I saw people, kindled with the fire of anger, stoning a youth to death, and ever crying out loudly to each other, "Kill, kill!"

and him I saw sink to the ground, for already death was heavy upon him, but of his eyes he ever made gates unto heaven, praying to the high Lord in such torture, with that look which unlocks pity, that He would forgive his persecutors.

When my mind returned outwardly to the things that are real outside of it, I recognized my not false errors. My leader, who could see me acting like one who frees himself from sleep, said, "What ails you, that you cannot control yourself, but have come more than half a league veiling your eyes and with staggering legs, like a man overcome by wine or sleep?"

"O my sweet father," I said, "if you will listen to me I will tell you what it was that appeared to me when my legs were so taken from me."

And he, "If you had a hundred masks upon your face, your thoughts however slight would not be hidden from me. That which you saw was shown you in order that you might not refuse to open your heart to the waters of peace, which are poured from the eternal fountain. I did not ask 'What ails you?' for the reason of one who looks only with unseeing eyes when another's body lies insensible, but I asked in order to give strength to your feet. So must the sluggish be spurred who are slow to use their waking hour when it returns."

We were journeying on through the evening, straining our eyes forward as far as we could against the bright late beams, when lo, little by little, a smoke dark as night, rolling towards us; nor was there room there to escape from it: this took from us our sight and the pure air.

CANTO XVI

GLOOM of hell, or night bereft of every planet under a barren sky obscured by clouds as much as it can be, never made a veil to my sight so thick nor of stuff so harsh to the sense, as that smoke which covered us there, so that it did not let the eye stay open; wherefore my wise and trusty escort drew to my side and offered me his shoulder. Even as a blind man goes behind his guide that he may not stray or knock against what might injure or perhaps kill him, so I went through that bitter and foul air, listening to my leader, who kept saying, "Take care that you are not cut off from me."

I heard voices, and each one seemed to pray for peace and for mercy to the Lamb of God that takes sins away.

Their beginnings were always "*Agnus Dei*"; one word was with them all, and one measure, so that full concord seemed to be among them.

"Are these spirits, master, that I hear?" I said; and he answered me, "You judge aright, and they go loosening the knot of anger."

"Who then are you that cleave our smoke and speak of us even as if you still measured time by calends?" Thus spoke a voice; wherefore my master said, "Answer, and ask if by this way one goes up." And I, "O creature that are cleansing yourself to return fair to Him who made you, you shall hear a marvel if you follow me."

"I will follow you as far as is allowed me," it replied, "and if the smoke does not let us see, hearing will keep us together instead."

Then I began, "With those swaddling-bands which death unbinds I am journeying upwards, and I came here through the anguish of Hell; and since God has received me so far into His grace that He wills that I see His court in a manner wholly outside modern usage, do not hide from me who you were before death, but tell me, and tell me if I am on the right way to the passage; and your words shall be our escort."

"I was Lombard and was called Marco; I knew the world and loved that worth at which all now have unbent the bow.

For mounting up you are going aright." Thus he replied, then added, "I pray you that you pray for me when you are above."

And I to him, "I pledge my faith to you to do what you ask of me. But I am bursting from a doubt within if I do not free myself from it. At first it was simple, and now it is made double by your statement, which makes certain to me, both here and elsewhere, that with which I couple it. The world is indeed as utterly deserted by every virtue as you declare to me, and pregnant and overspread with iniquity, but I beg you to point out to me the cause, so that I may see it and show it to men, for one places it in the heavens and another here below."

He first heaved a deep sigh which grief wrung into "Ah me!" then began, "Brother, the world is blind, and truly you come from it! You who are living refer every cause upward to the heavens alone, as if they of necessity moved all things with them. If this were so, free will would be destroyed in you, and there would be no justice in happiness for good or grief for evil. The heavens initiate your movements: I do not say all of them, but supposing I did say so, a light is given you to know good and evil, and free will, which if it endure fatigue in its first battles with the heavens, afterwards, if it is well nurtured, it conquers completely.

You lie subject, in your freedom, to a greater power and to a better nature, and that creates the mind in you which the heavens have not in their charge. Therefore if the present world goes astray, in you is the cause, in you let it be sought: and I will now be a true scout to you in this.

"From His hands, who fondly loves it before it exists, comes forth after the fashion of a child that sports, now weeping, now laughing, the simple little soul, which knows nothing, save that, proceeding from a glad Maker, it turns eagerly to what delights it. First it tastes the savor of a trifling good: there it is beguiled and runs after it, if guide or curb bend not its love. Wherefore it was needful to impose law as a bridle, it was needful to have a ruler who could discern at least the tower of the true city. Laws there are, but who puts his hand to them? None, because the shepherd that leads may chew the cud but has not the hoofs divided. Wherefore the people, who see their guide snatch only at that good whereof they are greedy, feed upon that, and seek no further. Well can you see that ill-guidance is what has made the world wicked, and not nature that is corrupt in you. Rome, which made the world good, was wont to have two Suns, which made visible both the one road and the other, that of the world and that of God.

The one has quenched the other, and the sword is joined to the crook: and the one together with the other must perforce go ill —since joined, the one does not fear the other. If you do not believe me, look well at the ear, for every plant is known by the seed.

"On the land that is watered by the Adige and the Po valor and courtesy were once to be found, before Frederick met with strife. Now anyone may safely pass there who out of shame would avoid speaking with the good or coming near them. There are yet indeed three old men in whom the ancient times rebuke the new, and it seems to them long till God remove them to a better life: Currado da Palazzo and the good Gherardo and Guido da Castel, who is better named, in the French fashion, the simple Lombard. Tell henceforth that the Church of Rome, by confounding in itself two governments, falls in the mire and befouls both itself and its burden."

"O Marco mine," I said, "you reason well; and now I perceive why the sons of Levi were excluded from inheritance. But what Gherardo is this who, you say, remains for sample of the extinct people, in reproach of the barbarous age?"

"Either your speech beguiles me, or it makes trial of me," he answered, "for you, speaking to me in Tuscan, seem to know nothing of the good Gherardo.

I know him by no other added name, unless I took it from his daughter Gaia. May God be with you, for I come with you no farther. Behold the brightness that rays through the smoke already whitening, and I must go—the angel is there—before I am seen by him."

So he turned back and would not hear me more.

CANTO XVII

RECALL, reader, if ever in the mountains a mist has caught you, through which you could not see except as moles do through the skin, how, when the moist dense vapors begin to dissipate, the sphere of the sun enters feebly through them, and your fancy will quickly come to see how, at first, I saw the sun again, which was now at its setting. So, matching mine to the trusty steps of my master, I came forth from such a fog to the rays which were already dead on the low shores.

O imagination, that do sometimes so snatch us from outward things that we give no heed, though a thousand trumpets sound around us, who moves you if the sense affords you naught? A light moves you which takes form in heaven, of itself, or by a will that downward guides it.

Of her impious deed who changed her form into the bird that most delights to sing, the impress appeared in my imagination,

and at this my mind was so restrained within itself, that from outside came naught that was then received by it. Then rained down within the high fantasy one crucified, scornful and fierce in his mien, and so was he dying. Round about him were the great Ahasuerus, Esther his wife, and the just Mordecai who was in speech and deed so blameless. And when this imagination burst of itself, like a bubble for which the water fails beneath which it was made, there rose in my vision a maiden, weeping sorely, and she was saying, "O Queen, why through anger have you willed to be naught? You have killed yourself in order not to lose Lavinia: now you have lost me! I am she who mourns, mother, at yours, before another's ruin."

As sleep is broken, when on a sudden new light strikes on the closed eyes, and being broken, quivers before it wholly dies away, so my imagining fell down from me as soon as a light, brighter by far than that to which we are accustomed, smote on my face. I was turning to see where I was when a voice said, "Here is the ascent," which removed me from every other intent; and it gave to my desire to behold who it was that spoke such eagerness as never rests till it sees face to face.

But, as at the sun which oppresses our sight, and veils its own form by excess, so was my power failing me.

"This is a divine spirit that directs us to the way of the ascent without our asking, and hides itself by its own light. It does with us as one man with another, for he that waits for the asking and sees the need already sets himself unkindly toward denial. Now let us accord our steps to such an invitation; let us strive to ascend before it grows dark, for then it would not be possible until the day returns." Thus spoke my leader, and together we turned our footsteps to a stairway; and as soon as I was on the first step, near me I felt as it were the motion of a wing fanning my face, and I heard the words, "*Beati pacifici*, who are without evil wrath."

Already the last rays before nightfall were lifted so high above us that the stars were appearing on many sides. "O my strength, why do you so melt away?" I said within myself, for I felt the power of my legs suspended. We stood where the stair went no higher and we were stopped there, even as a ship that arrives at the shore; and I listened a little if I might hear anything in the new circle. Then I turned to my master, and said,

"My sweet father, say what offense is purged here in the circle where we are: if our feet are stayed, do not stay your speech."

And he to me, "The love of good which comes short of its duty is here restored: here the ill-slackened oar is plied anew. But that you may understand yet more clearly, turn your mind to me, and you shall gather some good fruit from our stay."

He began: "Neither Creator nor creature, my son, was ever without love, either natural or of the mind, and this you know. The natural is always without error; but the other may err either through an evil object, or through too much or too little vigor. While it is directed on the Primal Good, and on secondary goods observes right measure, it cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure. But when it is turned awry to evil, or speeds to good with more zeal, or with less, than it ought, against the Creator works His creature. Hence you can comprehend that love must needs be the seed in you of every virtue and of every action deserving punishment.

"Now, inasmuch as love can never turn its sight from the weal of its subject, all things are secure from self-hatred; and since no being can be conceived of as severed from the First, and as standing by itself, every creature is cut off from hatred of Him.

It follows, if I distinguish rightly, that the evil we love is our neighbor's, and this love springs up in three ways in your clay. There is he that hopes to excel by the abasement of his neighbor, and solely for this desires that he be cast down from his greatness. There is he that fears to lose power, favor, honor, and fame, because another is exalted, by which he is so saddened that he loves the contrary. And there is he who seems so outraged by injury that he becomes greedy of vengeance, and such a one must needs contrive another's hurt. This threefold love is wept for down here below.

"Now I would have you hear of the other, which hastens toward the good in faulty measure. Each one apprehends vaguely a good wherein the mind may find rest, and this it desires; wherefore each one strives to attain thereto. If lukewarm love draws you to see it or to gain it, this terrace after due repentance torments you for it.

"Another good there is which does not make man happy, it is not happiness, it is not the good essence, the fruit and root of every good. The love which abandons itself to that is wept for above us in three circles, but how it is distinguished as threefold I do not say, that you may search it out for yourself."

CANTO XVIII

THE LOFTY teacher had made an end of his discourse and was looking intently in my face to see if I was satisfied; and I, whom a fresh thirst was already goading, was silent outwardly, and within was saying, "Perhaps I irk him with too much questioning." But that true father, who was aware of the timid desire which did not declare itself, by speaking gave me courage to speak. Therefore I said, "Master, my sight is so quickened in your light that I discern clearly all that your discourse distinguishes or declares; wherefore, dear and gentle father, I pray that you expound love to me, to which you reduce every good action and its opposite."

"Direct on me the keen eyes of your understanding," he said, "and the error will be manifest to you of the blind who make themselves guides.

"The mind, which is created quick to love, is responsive to everything that pleases, as soon as by pleasure it is roused to action. Your faculty of apprehension draws an image from a real existence and displays it within you, so that it makes the mind turn to it; and if, thus turned, the mind inclines toward it, that inclination is love, that inclination is nature which is bound in you anew by pleasure. Then, even as fire moves upwards by reason of its form, being born to ascend thither where it lasts longest in its matter, so the captive mind enters into desire, which is a spiritual movement, and never rests until the thing loved makes it rejoice. Now it may be apparent to you how far the truth is hidden from the people who aver that every love is praiseworthy in itself, because perhaps its matter appears always to be good: but not every imprint is good, although the wax be good."

"Your discourse and my understanding which has followed it," I replied, "have revealed love to me; but that has made me more full of doubt; for if love is offered to us from without, and if the soul walks with no other foot, it has no merit whether it go straight or crooked."

And he to me, "As far as reason sees here I can tell you; beyond that wait only for Beatrice, for it is a matter of faith.

"Every substantial form that is both distinct from matter and united with it, holds within itself a specific virtue, which is not perceived except through operation nor ever shows itself save by its effect, as life in a plant by the green leaves. Therefore, whence comes the intelligence of the first cognitions man does not know, nor whence the affection for the first objects of desire, which exist in you even as zeal in the bee for making honey; and this primal will admits no deserving of praise or blame. Now, in order that to this will every other will may be conformed, there is innate in you the faculty that counsels and that ought to hold the threshold of assent. This is the principle wherefrom is derived the reason of desert in you, according as it garners and winnows good and evil loves. They who in their reasoning went to the root of the matter took note of this innate liberty, and accordingly bequeathed ethics to the world. Wherefore, suppose that every love which is kindled in you arises of necessity, the power to arrest it is in you. This noble virtue Beatrice understands as the free will: and therefore look that you have it in mind if she should speak of it to ycu."

The moon, retarded almost to midnight, shaped like a bucket that continues to glow, made the stars appear scarcer to us,

and her course against the heavens was on those paths which the sun inflames, when they in Rome see it between the Sardinians and the Corsicans at its setting. And that noble shade, through whom Pietola is more renowned than any Mantuan town, had put off the burden I had laid upon him; wherefore I, who had garnered clear and plain reasons to my questions, remained like one who rambles drowsily. But this drowsiness was taken suddenly from me by people who had now come round to us behind our backs. And even as Ismenus and Asopus saw of old a fury and a throng along their banks by night, if but the Thebans had need of Bacchus, suchwise, by what I saw of them, bending their way around that circle, were coming those whom right will and a just love bestride. Soon were they upon us, because all that great throng was moving at a run; and two in front were shouting in tears, "Mary ran with haste to the hill country," and "Caesar, to subdue Lerida, thrust at Marseilles and then ran on to Spain." "Swift, swift! let no time be lost through little love," cried the others following, "that zeal in doing well may renew grace."

"O people in whom keen fervor now perhaps makes good the negligence and delay used by you through lukewarmness in well-

doing, this one who lives—and indeed I do not lie to you—would go up as soon as the sun shines to us again; therefore tell us where the opening is at hand."

These were my leader's words; and one of the spirits said, "Come behind us, and you shall find the gap. We are so filled with desire to keep moving that we cannot stay; forgive, therefore, if you take our penance for rudeness. I was Abbot of San Zeno at Verona under the rule of the good Barbarossa, of whom Milan still talks with sorrow. And one there is that has already a foot in the grave who soon will lament on account of that monastery, and will be sad for having had power there, because his son, deformed in his whole body and worse in mind, and who was born in shame, he has put there in place of its lawful shepherd."

If he said more, or if he was silent, I do not know, so far already had he raced beyond us, but this much I heard and was pleased to retain. And he that was my succor in every need said, "Turn round here, see two of them who come giving a bite to sloth." Behind all the rest they were saying, "The people for whom the sea opened were dead before Jordan saw its heirs; and those who did not endure the toil to the end with Anchises' son gave themselves to a life without glory."

Then when those shades were so far parted from us that they could no more be seen, a new thought arose within me, from which others many and diverse were born; and I so rambled from one to another that, wandering thus, I closed my eyes, and transmuted my musing into a dream.

CANTO XIX

At the hour when the day's heat, overcome by Earth and at times by Saturn, can no more warm the cold of the moon—when the geomancers see their *Fortuna Major* rise in the East before dawn by a path which does not long stay dark for it—there came to me in a dream a woman, stammering, with eyes asquint and crooked on her feet, with maimed hands, and of sallow hue. I gazed upon her: and even as the sun revives cold limbs benumbed by night, so my look made ready her tongue, and then in but little time set her full straight, and colored her pallid face even as love requires. When she had her speech thus unloosed, she began to sing so that it would have been hard for me to turn my attention from her.

"I am," she sang, "I am the sweet Siren who leads mariners astray in mid-sea, so full am I of pleasantness to hear. Ulysses, eager to journey on, I turned aside to my song; and whosoever abides with me rarely departs, so wholly do I satisfy him." Her mouth was not yet shut when a lady, holy and alert, appeared close beside me to put her to confusion. "O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?" she said sternly; and he came on with his eyes fixed only on that honest one. He seized the other and laid her bare in front, rending her garments and showing me her belly: this waked me with the stench that issued therefrom. I turned my eyes, and the good master said, "I have called you at least three times: arise and come, let us find the opening by which you may enter."

I rose up; and all the circles of the holy mountain were already filled with the high day, and we journeyed with the new sun at our back. Following him, I was bearing my brow like one that has it burdened with thought, who makes of himself a half-arch of a bridge, when I heard, "Come, here is the passage," spoken in a tone gentle and kind, such as is not heard in this mortal region. With open wings that seemed like a swan's he who thus had spoken to us turned us upward between the two walls of hard rock,

then moved his feathers and fanned us, declaring "*Qui lugent*" to be blessed, for they shall have their souls possessed of consolation.

"What ails you that you keep gazing on the ground?" my guide began to say to me, when we had both climbed a little above the angel. And I, "In such apprehension I am made to go by a new vision, which bends me to itself so that I cannot leave off thinking on it."

"You have seen," he said, "that ancient witch who alone is now wept for above us: you have seen how man is freed from her. Let it suffice you, and strike your heels on the ground: turn your eyes to the lure which the eternal King spins with the mighty spheres." Like the falcon that first looks down, then turns at the cry and stretches forward, through desire of the food that draws him thither, such I became, and such, so far as the rock is cleft to afford a way to him who mounts, I went, up to where the circling is begun.

When I had come forth on the fifth round, I saw people upon it who were weeping, lying on the ground all turned downward. "*Adhaesit pavimento anima mea*," I heard them saying with sighs so deep that the words could hardly be distinguished.

"O elect of God, whose sufferings both justice and hope make less hard, direct us toward the high ascents."

"If you come exempt from lying prostrate, and would most quickly find the way, let your right hand be ever to the outside." Thus the poet asked, and thus came the answer from a little way ahead; wherefore, by this speech, I marked what was concealed, then turned my eyes on the eyes of my lord: at which with a glad sign he gave assent to what the look of my desire was craving. And when I was free to do as I wished, I drew forward above that soul whose words before had made me take note of him, saying, "Spirit in whom weeping matures that without which there is no returning to God, suspend a little for me your greater care. Tell me who you were; and why you have your backs turned upwards, and whether you will have me obtain aught for you yonder whence I set out alive."

And he to me, "Why heaven turns our backs to itself you shall know; but first *scias quod ego fui successor Petri.* Between Sestri and Chiavari descends a fair river and of its name the title of my blood makes its top. One month, and little more, I learned how the great mantle weighs on him who keeps it from the mire, so that all other burdens seem a feather. My conversion, ah me! was tardy; but when I was made Roman Shepherd, then I found how false life is.

I saw that there the heart was not at rest; nor was it possible to mount higher in that life, wherefore the love of this was kindled in me. Up to that time I had been a wretched soul, parted from God and wholly avaricious. Now, as you see, I am here punished for it. What avarice does is displayed here in the purging of the down-turned souls, and the mountain has no more bitter penalty. Even as our eyes, fixed upon earthly things, were not lifted on high, so justice here has sunk them to the earth; even as avarice quenched all our love of good, so that our works were lost, so justice here holds us fast, bound and captive in feet and hands; and so long as it shall be the pleasure of the just Lord, so long shall we lie here outstretched and motionless."

I had kneeled, and wished to speak; but when I began, and he became aware, by the sound alone, of my reverence, "What cause," said he, "has thus bent you down?" And I to him, "Because of your dignity my conscience smote me for standing."

"Straighten your legs, rise up, brother," he replied, "do not err: I am fellow-servant with you and with the others unto one Power. If ever you have understood that holy gospel sound which says '*Neque nubent*,' you may well see why I speak thus.

Go your way now: I would not have you stop longer, for your stay hinders my weeping, whereby I ripen that which you have spoken of. A niece I have yonder who is named Alagia, good in herself if only our house make her not wicked by example; and she alone remains to me yonder."

CANTO XX

AGAINST a better will the will fights ill: wherefore against my pleasure, to please him, I drew from the water the sponge unfilled. I moved on, and my leader moved on, keeping to the free spaces alongside the rock, as one goes on a wall close to the battlements; for the people who pour from their eyes drop by drop the evil that fills the whole world approach too near the edge on the other side.

Accursed be you, ancient wolf, who have more prey than all the other beasts, because of your hunger endlessly deep! O heaven, in whose revolution it seems conditions here below are thought to be changed, when will he come through whom she shall depart?

We were going on with slow and scant steps and I attentive to the shades whom I heard piteously weeping and complaining,

and by chance I heard one ahead of us crying out in his lament, "Sweet Mary," even as a woman does who is in travail; and continuing, "How poor you were may be seen from that hostelry where you laid down your holy burden." And following this I heard, "O good Fabricius, you chose to possess virtue with poverty rather than great riches with iniquity." These words so pleased me that I pressed forward to have acquaintance with that spirit from whom they seemed to come, and he went on to tell of the bounty which Nicholas gave to the maidens, to lead their youth to honor.

"O spirit that do discourse of so much good, tell me who you were," I said, "and why you alone renew these worthy praises. Your words shall not be without reward, if I return to complete the short way of that life which flies to its end."

And he, "I will tell you, not for any solace that I expect from yonder, but because such grace shines in you before you are dead. I was the root of the evil plant that overshadows all the Christian land so that good fruit is seldom plucked therefrom; but if Douai, Lille, Ghent, and Bruges had the strength, there would soon be vengeance on it: and this I implore of Him who judges all things.

I was called Hugh Capet yonder; of me were born the Philips and the Louises, by whom of late France is ruled. I was the son of a butcher of Paris. When the ancient kings had all died out, save one, a gray-clad monk, I found tight in my hands the reins of the government of the realm, and with so much power from new possessions and with friends in such abundance that to the widowed crown my son's head was promoted, from whom began their consecrated bones.

"So long as the great dowry of Provence had not taken the sense of shame from my race, it was of little account, but still it did no evil. There by force and by fraud its rapine began; and then, for amends, it seized Ponthieu and Normandy and Gascony; Charles came into Italy and, for amends, made a victim of Conradin; and then, for amends, thrust Thomas back to Heaven. A time I see not long from this present day which brings another Charles out of France, to make both himself and his own the better known. Forth he comes unarmed save only with the lance with which Judas tilted, and he so couches it that he bursts the paunch of Florence; from this he shall gain, not land, but sin and shame, so much the heavier for him the lighter he reckons such wrong.

The other, who once came forth a captive from a ship, I see selling his own daughter and haggling over her as do the corsairs with female slaves. O Avarice, what more can you do to us, since you have so drawn my race to yourself that it has no care for its own flesh? In order that the past and the future ill may seem less, I see the fleur-de-lis enter Alagna, and in His Vicar Christ made captive. I see Him mocked a second time; and I see renewed the vinegar and the gall, and Him slain between living thieves. I see the new Pilate so cruel that this does not sate him, but without decree he directs his greedy sails against the Temple. O my Lord, when shall I rejoice to see the vengeance which, concealed, makes sweet Thine anger in Thy secrecy?

"What I was saying of that only bride of the Holy Ghost, and which made you turn toward me for some gloss, so much is the answer to all our prayers, as long as the day lasts; but when the night comes, we take up a contrary sound instead: then we recall Pygmalion, whom insatiate lust of gold made traitor, thief, and parricide; and the misery of the avaricious Midas which followed on his greedy demand, whereat men must always laugh.

Each then remembers the foolish Acan, how he stole the spoils, so that the wrath of Joshua seems to sting him here again. Then we accuse Sapphira with her husband; we celebrate the kicks which Heliodorus had; and in infamy the name of Polymestor who slew Polydorus circles all the mountain. Last, the cry here is, 'Tell us, Crassus, for you know, what is the savor of gold?' Sometimes we discourse, the one loud, the other low, according to the ardor that spurs us to speak, now with greater, now with lesser force; therefore, in the good we tell of here by day I was not alone before, but here nearby no other soul was raising his voice."

We were already parted from him and were striving to go forward as fast as we were able, when I felt the mountain shake like something that is falling; at which a chill seized me such as seizes one who goes to his death. Assuredly Delos was not shaken so violently before Latona made her nest therein to give birth to the two eyes of Heaven. Then began such a cry on all sides that my master drew toward me, saying, "Do not fear while I guide you." "*Gloria in excelsis, Deo*" all were saying, by what I understood from those nearby, where the cry could be heard.

We stood motionless and in suspense, like the shepherds who first heard that song, until the quaking ceased and it was ended. Then we took up our holy way again, looking at the shades that lay on the ground, already returned to their wonted plaint. No ignorance—if my memory err not in this—did ever with so great assault make me desirous of knowing as it seemed I then experienced in thought. Nor, for our haste, did I dare ask, nor of myself could I see aught there. So I went on, timid and pensive.

CANTO XXI

THE NATURAL thirst which is never quenched, save with the water whereof the poor Samaritan woman asked the grace, was tormenting me, and our haste was urging me along the encumbered way behind my leader, and I was grieving at the just vengeance; and lo, as Luke writes for us that Christ, new-risen from the sepulchral cave, appeared to the two who were on the way, a shade appeared to us, and he was coming on behind us while we were watching the crowd that lay at our feet, and we were not aware of him till he first spoke, saying "O my brothers, may God give you peace."

We turned quickly and Virgil answered him with the greeting that is fitting thereto; then he began, "May the true court which binds me in the eternal exile bring you in peace to the assembly of the blest."

"How," he said—and meanwhile we hastened on—"if you are shades whom God deigns not on high, who has brought you so far along His stairs?"

And my teacher, "If you look at the marks which this man bears and which are traced by the angel, you will clearly see that he is to reign with the good. But since she who spins day and night had not yet drawn off for him the distaff which Clotho loads and compacts for everyone, his soul, which is your sister and mine, could not make the ascent alone, because it sees not after our fashion. Wherefore I was brought forth from Hell's wide jaws to guide him, and I will guide him onward as far as my school can lead him. But tell me, if you can, why the mountain quaked so just now, and why all seemed to shout at once, down to its moist base?"

Thus asking did he thread the needle's eye of my desire, and with hope alone my thirst was made less craving; and the other began, "The holy rule of the mountain suffers nothing that is without order or is outside its custom. This place is free from every change. That which heaven receives into itself from itself may here operate as cause, and naught else: wherefore neither rain, nor hail, nor snow, nor dew, nor hoarfrost falls any higher than the short little stairway of three steps. Clouds dense or thin do not appear, nor lightning-flash, nor Thaumas's daughter who often changes her region yonder;

nor does dry vapor rise beyond the highest of the three steps of which I spoke, where the vicar of Peter has his feet. It trembles perhaps lower down, little or much, but up here, from wind that is hidden in the earth, it never trembles, I know not how. It trembles here when some soul feels itself pure so that it may rise or set out for the ascent, and that shout follows. Of its purity the will alone gives proof, which takes by surprise the soul, wholly free now to change its convent, and avails it to will. It wills indeed before, but the desire consents not, which Divine Justice sets, counter to the will, toward the penalty, even as it was toward the sin. And I, who have lain in this pain five hundred years and more, only now felt free volition for a better threshold. Therefore you felt the earthquake and heard the pious spirits about the mountain give praises to that Lord—soon may He send them above!"

Thus he spoke to us; and since we enjoy more the draught in proportion as our thirst is great, I could not tell how much he profited me. And the wise leader, "Now I see the net that entangles you here, and how it is unmeshed, why it trembles here, and at what you rejoice together; and now be pleased to make me know who you are, and why you have lain here so many centuries let me gather from your words."

"In the time when the good Titus, with help of the Highest King, avenged the wounds whence issued the blood sold by Judas, I was famous enough yonder with the name which lasts longest and honors most," replied that spirit, "but not yet with faith. So sweet was my vocal spirit that me, a Toulousan, Rome drew to itself, where I was deemed worthy to have my brows adorned with myrtle. Men yonder still speak my name, which is Statius. I sang of Thebes, and then of the great Achilles, but I fell on the way with my second burden. The sparks which warmed me from the divine flame whereby more than a thousand have been kindled were the seeds of my poetic fire: I mean the *Aeneid*, which in poetry was both mother and nurse to me—without it I had achieved little of worth; and to have lived yonder when Virgil lived I would consent to one sun more than I owe to my coming forth from exile."

These words turned Virgil to me with a look that, silent, said, "Be silent." But the power that wills cannot do everything; for smiles and tears are such close followers on the emotion from which each springs, that in the most truthful they least follow the will. I only smiled, like one who makes a sign; at which the shade was silent, and looked into my eyes, where the expression is most fixed,

and, "So may your great labor end in good," he said, "why did your face just now show me the flash of a smile?"

Now am I caught on the one side and the other: the one makes me keep silence, the other conjures me to speak, so that I sigh and am understood by my master, and, "Do not fear to speak," he says to me, "but speak and tell him what he asks so earnestly." Wherefore I, "Perhaps you wonder, ancient spirit, at my smiling; but I would have yet more wonder seize you. This one who guides my eyes on high is that Virgil from whom you derived the strength to sing of men and of the gods; and if you did believe other cause for my smile, dismiss it as untrue, and believe it was those words which you spoke of him."

Already he was stooping to embrace my teacher's feet; but he said to him, "Brother, do not so, for you are a shade and a shade you see."

And he, rising, "Now you may comprehend the measure of the love that burns in me for you, when I forget our emptiness and treat shades as solid things."

CANTO XXII

Now THE angel who had directed us to the sixth circle was left behind us, having erased a stroke from my face, and he had declared to us that they whose desire is for righteousness are blessed, his words completing this with "*sitiunt*," without the rest. And I, lighter than at the other passages, went on so that without any toil I was following the fleet spirits upwards, when Virgil began, "Love, kindled by virtue, has ever kindled other love, if but its flame appear outwardly; wherefore, from the hour when Juvenal descended among us in the Limbo of Hell and made your affection known to me, my good will toward you has been such as never yet did bind to an unseen person, so that these stairs will now seem short to me.

But tell me—and as a friend pardon me if too great confidence slackens my rein, and talk with me now as with a friend—how could avarice find place in your breast, amid wisdom so great as that wherewith you were filled by your zeal?"

These words first made Statius begin to smile a little, then he replied, "Every word of yours is a dear token to me of love; but truly things oftentimes do so appear, their true reasons being hidden, that they give false matter for doubting. Your question makes plain to me your belief, perhaps because of that circle where I was, that I was avaricious in the other life. Now know that avarice was too far parted from me, and this want of measure thousands of courses of the moon have punished; and were it not that I set right my care, when I gave heed to the lines where you exclaim, angered as it were against human nature: 'To what do you not drive the appetite of mortals, O accursèd hunger of gold?' at the rolling I should feel the grievous jousts. It was then that I perceived that our hands could open their wings too wide in spending, and I repented of that as well as of other sins. How many will rise again with shorn locks, through ignorance, which takes away repentance of this sin, during life and at the last hour!

Know, too, that the fault which rebuts any sin with direct opposition dries up its verdure here along with it. Therefore, if I, to purge me, have been among that people who bewail their avarice, it is because of its contrary that this has befallen me."

"Now, when you sang of the cruel strife of Jocasta's twofold sorrow," said the singer of the Bucolic songs, "it does not appear, from that which Clio touches with you there, that the faith, without which good works suffice not, had yet made you faithful. If that is so, then what sun or what candles dispelled your darkness, so that thereafter you set your sails to follow the Fisherman?"

And he to him, "You it was who first sent me toward Parnassus to drink in its caves, and you who first did light me on to God. You were like one who goes by night and carries the light behind him and profits not himself, but makes those wise who follow him, when you said, 'The ages are renewed; Justice returns and the first age of man, and a new progeny descends from heaven.' Through you I was a poet, through you a Christian; but that you may see better what I outline, I will set my hand to color it. Already the whole world was big with the true faith, sown by the messengers of the eternal realm,

and those words of yours I have just spoken were so in accord with the new preachers that I began to frequent them. They came then to seem to me so holy that when Domitian persecuted them, their wailing was not without my tears, and while I remained yonder I succored them and their righteous lives made me scorn all other sects. And before I had led the Greeks to the rivers of Thebes in my verse, I received baptism; but, for fear, I was a secret Christian, long making show of paganism, and this lukewarmness made me circle round the fourth circle for more than four centuries. You, therefore, that did lift for me the covering that was hiding from me the great good I tell of, while we still have time to spare on the ascent, tell me, where is our ancient Terence, and Caecilius and Plautus and Varius, if you know; tell me if they are damned, and in which ward."

"These, and Persius and I and many others," replied my leader, "are with that Greek whom the Muses suckled more than any other, in the first circle of the dark prison; oftentimes we talk of that mountain which has our nurses ever with it. Euripides is with us there, and Antiphon, Simonides, Agathon, and many other Greeks who once decked their brows with laurel.

There of your own people are seen Antigone, Deiphyle, Argia, and Ismene sad still as she was. There she is seen who showed Langia; there is the daughter of Tiresias and Thetis and Deidamia with her sisters."

Now were both poets silent, intent now on gazing round, freed from the ascent and the walls, and already four handmaids of the day were left behind and the fifth was at the chariot-pole, directing yet upward its flaming horn, when my leader said, "I think it behooves us to turn our right shoulders to the outer edge and to circle the mountain as we are wont." Thus usage was our guide there, and we went our way with less doubt because of the assent of that worthy soul.

They were going on in front, and I solitary behind, and I was listening to their speech which gave me understanding in poetry. But soon the pleasant converse was broken by a tree which we found in the midst of the way, with fruit sweet and good to smell. And as a fir-tree tapers upward from branch to branch, so downwards did that—I think so that none may climb it. On the side where our way was bounded there fell from the high rock a clear water which spread itself over the leaves above.

The two poets approached the tree, and a voice from within the leaves cried, "Of this food you shall have want." Then it said, "Mary thought more how the wedding-feast might be honorable and complete, than of her own mouth, which now answers for you; and the Roman women of old were content with water for their drink; and Daniel despised food and gained wisdom. The first age was fair as gold: with hunger it made acorns savory, and with thirst made every streamlet nectar. Honey and locusts were the viands that nourished the Baptist in the desert; wherefore he is in glory and so great, as in the Gospel is revealed to you."

CANTO XXIII

While I was peering thus intently through the green foliage, even as he is wont to do who wastes his life after the birds, my more than father said to me, "Son, come on now, for the time that is allotted us must be more usefully apportioned."

I turned my face, and my steps no less quickly, following after the sages whose talk was such that it made the going of no cost to me, when lo, in tears and song was heard: "*Labïa mëa Domine*," in such manner that it gave birth to joy and to grief. "O sweet father, what is this I hear?" I began; and he, "Shades who go perhaps loosening the knot of their debt."

Even as pilgrims who go absorbed in thought and, if they overtake strangers on the road, turn to them without stopping,

so a crowd of souls, silent and devout, which came on behind us with greater speed and passed on, gazed at us in wonder. Each was dark and hollow in the eyes, pallid in the face and so wasted that the skin took its shape from the bones. I do not believe that Erysichthon became thus withered to the utter rind by hunger when he had most fear of it. I said to myself in thought, "Behold the people who lost Jerusalem, when Mary struck her beak into her son!" The sockets of their eyes seemed rings without gems: he who reads *OMO* in the face of man would there surely have recognized the *M*. Who, not knowing how, would believe that the scent of a fruit and that of a water, begetting desire, would have wrought thus?

I was now wondering what so famishes them, the cause of their leanness and their wretched scurf being unknown to me as yet, when lo, from the depths of his head a shade turned his eyes on me and looked at me fixedly, then cried loudly, "What a grace is this to me!" I should never have known him by his appearance, but in his voice was plain to me that which his countenance had suppressed in itself: this spark rekindled in me all my knowledge of the changed features, and I recognized the face of Forese.

"Ah, strive not with the dry scab that discolors my skin," he begged, "nor with my lack of flesh, but tell me the truth about yourself, and tell me who are those two souls yonder that give you escort. Delay not to speak to me!"

"Your face, which once I wept for dead," I answered him, "now gives me no less cause for tears when I see it so disfigured. Therefore tell me, in God's name, what strips you so? Make me not talk while I am marveling, for ill can he speak who is full of other desire."

And he to me, "From the eternal counsel virtue descends into the water and into the tree left behind, whereby I waste away thus. All this people who weeping sing, sanctify themselves again in hunger and thirst, for having followed appetite to excess. The scent which comes from the fruit, and from the spray that is diffused over the green leaves, kindles within us a craving to eat and to drink; and not once only, as we circle this road, is our pain renewed—I say pain and ought to say solace: for that will leads us to the trees which led glad Christ to say '*Elì*,' when He delivered us with His blood."

And I to him, "Forese, from that day on which you changed the world for a better life, not five years have revolved till now.

If power to sin more came to an end in you before the hour supervened of the good sorrow that weds us anew to God, how is it you are come up here already? I had thought to find you down there below, where time is repaid for time."

And he to me, "Thus soon has led me to drink the sweet wormwood of the torments my Nella with her flood of tears; by her devout prayers and by her sighs she has brought me from the slope where they wait, and set me free from the other circles. So much more precious and beloved of God is my widow, whom I loved so well, as she is the more alone in good works: for the Barbagia of Sardinia is far more modest in its women than the Barbagia where I left her. O sweet brother, what would you have me say? Already in my vision is a future time, to which this hour shall not be very old, when the brazen-faced women of Florence shall be forbidden from the pulpit to go displaying their breasts with the paps. What Barbarian, what Saracen women were there ever, who required either spiritual or other discipline to make them go covered? But if the shameless creatures were assured of what swift heaven is preparing for them, already would they have their mouths open to howl;

for if our foresight here beguiles me not, they shall be sorrowing before he shall cover his cheeks with hair who is now consoled with lullabies. Ah, brother, now no longer conceal yourself from me! You see how not only I, but all these people are gazing there where you veil the sun."

Wherefore I to him, "If you bring back to mind what you have been with me and what I have been with you, the present memory will still be grievous. From that life he who goes before me turned me the other day, when the sister of him," and I pointed to the sun, "showed full to you. He it is that has led me through the profound night of the truly dead, in this true flesh which follows him. From there his counsels have drawn me up, ascending and circling this mountain, which makes you straight whom the world made crooked. So long he says that he will bear me company until I shall be there where Beatrice will be: there must I remain bereft of him. Virgil is he who tells me this," and I pointed to him, "and this other is that shade for whom just now your realm shook all its slopes, releasing him from itself."

CANTO XXIV

SPEECH made not the going, nor did the going make that more slow; but, talking, we went on apace even as a ship driven by a fair wind. And the shades, that seemed things twice dead, darted wonder at me from the depths of their eyes, perceiving that I was alive. And I, continuing my discourse, said, "He goes up perchance for another's sake more slowly than he would do. But, tell me, if you know, where is Piccarda; and tell me if I see any person of note among this folk that so gazes at me."

"My sister, who whether she was more fair or good I do not know, triumphs already on high Olympus, rejoicing in her crown." So he said first, and then, "Here it is not forbidden to name each other, since our features are so wrung by the fast.

This," and he pointed with his finger, "is Bonagiunta, Bonagiunta of Lucca; and that face beyond him, more drawn than the others, had Holy Church in his arms: he was from Tours; and by fasting he purges the eels of Bolsena and the Vernaccia wine." Many others he named to me, one by one, and at their naming all appeared content, so that for this I saw not one dark look. I saw, plying their teeth on the void for very hunger, Ubaldin da la Pila and Bonifazio who shepherded many people with his staff. I saw Messer Marchese, who once had leisure for drinking at Forlì with less thirst, and yet was such that he felt not sated. But as he does who looks, and then esteems one more than another, so did I to him of Lucca, who seemed to have most knowledge of me. He was murmuring, and I know not what, save that I heard "Gentucca" there where he felt the pang of the justice which so strips them.

"O soul," said I, "that seem so eager to talk with me, speak so that I may hear you, and satisfy both yourself and me by your speech."

"A woman is born and wears not yet the veil," he began, "who shall make my city pleasing to you, however men may blame it. You shall go hence with this prophecy; if you have taken my murmuring in error, the real events will yet make it clear to you.

But tell me if I see here him who brought forth the new rhymes, beginning: 'Ladies that have understanding of love'?"

And I to him, "I am one who, when Love inspires me, takes note, and goes setting it forth after the fashion which he dictates within me."

"O brother," he said, "now I see the knot which kept the Notary, and Guittone, and me, short of the sweet new style that I hear. Clearly I see how your pens follow close after him who dictates, which certainly befell not with ours—and he who sets himself to seek farther can see no other difference between the one style and the other." And, as if satisfied, he was silent.

As the birds that winter along the Nile sometimes make a flock in the air, then fly in greater haste and go in file, so all that people there, light both through leanness and through desire, turning away their faces, quickened again their pace. And as one who is weary of running lets his companions go on, and walks until the panting of his chest be eased, so Forese let that holy flock pass by, and came on behind with me, saying, "When shall it be that I see you again?"

"I do not know how long I may live," I answered him, "but truly my return here will not be so speedy that in desire I shall not be sooner at the shore,

because the place where I was put to live is, day by day, more stripped of good and seems doomed to wretched ruin."

"Now go," said he, "for him who is most in fault I see dragged at the tail of a beast, toward the valley where there is no absolving. The beast at every step goes faster, increasing ever till it dashes him and leaves his body hideously disfigured. Those wheels have not long to revolve"—and he lifted his eyes up to the heavens—"before that will be clear to you which my speech cannot further declare. Now do you remain behind, for time is precious in this realm, so that I lose too much by coming with you thus at equal pace."

As a horseman sometimes issues forth from a troop that is riding and goes to win the honor of the first encounter, so he parted from us with greater strides, and I remained on the way with those two who were such great marshals of the world. And when he had gone on so far ahead of us that my eyes became such followers of him, as my mind was of his words, the laden and verdant branches of another tree appeared to me, and not far distant, because only then had I come round there. Beneath it I saw people lifting up their hands and crying I know not what toward the leaves, like eager and fond little children,

who beg, and he of whom they beg answers not, but to make their longing full keen, holds aloft what they desire and hides it not. Then they departed, as if undeceived. And now we came to the great tree which rejects so many prayers and tears.

"Pass farther onward, without drawing near. A tree is higher up that was eaten of by Eve, and this plant was raised from it." Thus among the branches I know not who spoke; wherefore Virgil and Statius and I, drawing close together, went onward along the side that rises.

"Remember," the voice was saying, "the accursèd ones that were formed in the clouds who, when gorged, fought Theseus with their double breasts; and the Hebrews who at the drinking showed themselves soft, wherefore Gideon would not have them for comrades when he came down the hills to Midian."

Thus, keeping close to one side of the way, we passed by, hearing sins of gluttony, once followed by woeful gains. Then, spread out along the solitary way, full a thousand paces and more bore us onward, each of us in meditation without a word.

"Why go you thus in thought, you three alone?" said a sudden voice; whereat I started as do frightened and skittish beasts. I raised my head to see who it was, and never in a furnace was glass or metal seen so glowing and red

as one I saw who said, "If it please you to mount up, here must you make the turn: this way he goes who desires to go for peace." His countenance had bereft me of sight, wherefore I turned and followed my teachers like one who goes according as he hears.

And as, heralding the dawn, the breeze of May stirs and smells sweet, all impregnate with grass and with flowers, such a wind I felt strike full on my brow, and right well I felt the pinions move, which wafted ambrosial fragrance to my senses; and I heard say, "Blessed are they who are so illumined by grace that the love of taste kindles not too great desire in their breasts, and who hunger always so far as is just."

CANTO XXV

It was now an hour when the ascent brooked no impediment, for the meridian circle had been left by the sun to the Bull, and by the night to the Scorpion. Therefore, like one that does not stop but, whatever may appear to him, goes on his way, if the goad of necessity prick him, so did we enter through the gap, one before the other, taking the stairway which by its straitness unpairs the climbers. And as the little stork that lifts its wing through desire to fly and, not venturing to abandon the nest, drops it again, even so was I, with desire to ask, kindled and quenched, going as far as the movement he makes who is preparing to speak. Nor, though our gait was swift, did my sweet father forbear, but said, "Discharge the bow of your speech which you have drawn to the iron."

Then I opened my mouth confidently and began, "How can one grow lean there where the need of nourishment is not felt?"

"If you would call to mind how Meleager was consumed at the consuming of a firebrand," he said, "this would not be so difficult to you; and if you would think how, at your every movement, your image moves within the mirror, that which seems hard would seem easy to you. But, in order that you may find rest in your desire, here is Statius, and I call on him and pray that he be now the healer of your wounds."

"If I explain to him the eternal view," replied Statius, "where you are present, let my excuse be that I cannot deny you."

Then he began, "If, son, your mind regards and receives my words, they will enlighten you on the 'how' of what you ask. The perfect blood, which never is drunk by the thirsty veins and is left behind as it were food which one removes from the table, acquires in the heart an informing power for all the bodily members, like that blood which flows through the veins to become those members. Digested yet again, it descends there whereof to be silent is more seemly than to speak; and thence afterwards drops upon other's blood, in natural vessel. There the one is mingled with the other, one designed to be passive, the other to be active, by reason of the perfect place whence it springs; and, conjoined with the former, the latter begins to operate, first by coagulating, then by quickening that to which it has given consistency to serve as its material.

The active virtue having become a soul, like that of a plant (but in so far different that this is on the way, and that has already arrived) so works then that now it moves and feels, like a sea-fungus; then it proceeds to develop organs for the powers of which it is the germ. Now, son, expands, now distends, the virtue which proceeds from the heart of the begetter, where nature makes provision for all the members. But how from animal it becomes a human being you do not see yet: this is such a point that once it made one wiser than you to err, so that in his teaching he separated the possible intellect from the soul because he saw no organ assumed by it.

"Open your breast to the truth which is coming, and know that, so soon as in the foetus the articulation of the brain is perfect, the First Mover turns to it with joy over such art of nature, and breathes into it a new spirit replete with virtue, which absorbs that which is active there into its own substance, and makes one single soul which lives and feels and circles on itself. And that you may marvel less at my words, look at the sun's heat, which is made wine when combined with the juice that flows from the vine.

"And when Lachesis has no more thread, the soul is loosed from the flesh and carries with it, in potency, both the human and the divine;

the other faculties all of them mute, but memory, intellect, and will far more acute in action than before. Without staying, it falls of itself marvelously to one of the banks. Here it first knows its own roads. As soon as space encompasses it there, the formative virtue radiates around, in form and quantity as in the living members. And as the air, when it is full of moisture, becomes adorned with various colors by another's rays which are reflected in it, so here the neighboring air shapes itself in that form which is virtually imprinted on it by the soul that stopped there; and then, like the flame which follows the fire wheresoever it moves, the spirit is followed by its new form. Inasmuch as therefrom it has its semblance, it is called a shade, and therefrom it forms the organs of every sense, even to the sight. By this we speak and by this we laugh, by this we make the tears and sighs which you may have heard about the mountain. According as the desires and the other affections prick us, the shade takes its form; and this is the cause of that at which you marvel."

And now we had come to the last circuit and had turned to the right and were intent on other care.

Here the bank flashes forth flames, and the edge of the terrace sends a blast upwards which bends them back and sequesters a path from them; wherefore it behooved us to go on the side that was free, one by one, and on the one side I feared the fire, and on the other I feared I might fall off. My leader said, "Along this place the rein must be kept tight on the eyes, for one might easily take a false step."

"*Summae Deus clementiae*" I then heard sung in the heart of the great burning, which made me no less eager to turn; and I saw spirits going through the fire, wherefore I looked at them and at my steps, with divided gaze from time to time. After the end which is made to that hymn, they cried aloud, "*Virum non cognosco*," then softly began the hymn again. When it was finished, they further cried, "Diana kept to the woods and chased Helice forth, who had felt the poison of Venus." Then they returned to their singing; then they cried wives and husbands who were chaste, even as virtue and marriage enjoin upon us. And this fashion, I believe, suffices them for all the time the fire burns them: with such treatment and with such diet must the last wound of all be healed.

CANTO XXVI

WHILE we were advancing thus along the brink, one before the other, the good master often saying to me, "Take heed: let my warning avail you," the sun was striking me on my right shoulder, for now its beams were changing the whole face of the West from azure to white. And with my shadow I made the flame appear more glowing, and merely at this slight sign I saw many shades, as they went on, give heed. This it was that first brought them to speak of me, and they began to say to each other, "That one does not seem a shadowy body"; then certain of them came as far as they could toward me, ever careful not to come out where they would not be burned.

"O you who go behind the others, not from tardiness but perhaps from reverence, answer me who burn in thirst and in fire;

nor to me alone is your answer needful, for all these others have greater thirst thereof than Indian or Ethiopian for cold water. Tell us how it is that you make a wall of yourself to the sun, quite as if you had not yet entered into death's net." Thus one of them spoke to me, and now I should have made myself known, had I not been intent on another strange thing which then appeared: for through the middle of the burning road people were coming with their faces opposite to these, and made me gaze in suspense. There on every side I see all the shades making haste and kissing one another, without stopping, content with brief greeting: thus within their dark band one ant touches muzzle with another, perhaps to spy out their way and their fortune.

As soon as they end the friendly greeting and before the first step there speeds onward, each one tries to shout the loudest: the new-come people "Sodom and Gomorrah," and the other, "Pasiphaë enters into the cow, that the bull may hasten to her lust." Then, like cranes that should fly, some to the Riphaean mountains and others toward the sands, these shy of the frost, those of the sun, the one people passes on, the other comes away, and they return weeping to their former chants and to the cry that most befits them.

And those same who had entreated me drew near to me as before, by their looks eager to listen.

Having twice seen their desire, I began, "O souls, certain of gaining, whensoever it may be, a state of peace, my limbs have not remained yonder green or ripe, but are here with me, with their blood and their joints. I go up hence in order to be blind no longer. A lady is above who wins grace for me, whereby I bring my mortal part through your world. But—so may your greatest longing soon be satisfied, so that the heaven harbor you which is full of love and widest spreads—tell me, so that I may yet trace it on paper, who you are, and what is that throng that is going away behind your backs."

Not otherwise is the astonished mountaineer overawed, and gazing round is dumb, when rude and rustic he enters the city, than was each shade in his looks; but when they were unburdened of amazement, which in lofty hearts is quickly stilled, "Blessed are you," he began again who had questioned me before, "who in order to die better do ship experience of our regions! The people who do not come with us offended in that for which Caesar in his triumph once heard 'Queen' cried out against him;

therefore they go off crying 'Sodom,' reproving themselves as you have heard, and they help the burning with their shame. Our sin was hermaphrodite: but because we observed not human law, following appetite like beasts, when we part from them, the name of her who bestialized herself in the beast-shaped planks is uttered by us, in opprobrium of ourselves. Now you know our deeds, and of what we were guilty; if perchance you wish to know by name who we are, there is no time to tell, nor could I. Concerning me I will indeed satisfy your wish: I am Guido Guinizzelli, and already I make my purgation because of good repentance before the end."

As in the sorrow of Lycurgus two sons became on beholding their mother again, so I became, but I do not rise to such heights, when I hear name himself the father of me and of others my betters who ever used sweet and gracious rhymes of love; and without hearing or speaking, I went pondering, gazing a long time at him; nor did I draw nearer to him, because of the fire. When I had fed my sight on him, I offered myself wholly ready for his service, with the oath that compels another's belief.

And he to me, "You leave, by that which I hear, traces so deep and clear in me that Lethe cannot take them away or make them dim;

but if your words just now swore truth, tell me for what reason you show yourself, by speech and look, to hold me dear."

And I to him, "Your sweet verses, which so long as modern use shall last, will make dear their very ink."

"O brother," he said, "he there whom I point out to you"—and he pointed to a spirit ahead—"was a better craftsman of the mother tongue: verses of love and tales of romance he surpassed them all—and let the fools talk who think that he of Limoges excels. They give heed to rumor rather than to truth, and thus settle their opinion before listening to art or reason. Thus did many of our fathers with Guittone, from cry to cry giving the prize to him alone, until with most the truth prevailed. Now, if you have such ample privilege that you are permitted to go to the cloister wherein Christ is abbot of the college, say there a paternoster for me, so far as is needful to us of this world where power to sin is no more ours." Then, perhaps to give place to another following close behind, he vanished through the flames like a fish that goes through the water to the bottom.

I moved forward a little towards him that had been pointed out to me, and said that for his name my desire was making ready a grateful place.

He began graciously to say, "So does your courteous request please me that I neither can nor would conceal myself from you. I am Arnaut, who weep and sing as I go; contritely I see my past folly, and joyously I see before me the joy that I await. Now I pray you, by that power which guides you to the summit of the stair, in due time be heedful of my pain." Then he hid himself in the fire that purifies them.

CANTO XXVII

As WHEN it darts forth its first beams there where its Maker shed His blood, while Ebro falls beneath the lofty Scales and the waves in the Ganges are scorched by noon, so stood the sun, so that the day was departing when the glad angel of God appeared to us. He stood outside the flames on the bank and sang "*Beati mundo corde*" in a voice far more living than ours. Then, "No farther may you go, holy souls, if first the fire sting not; enter into it, and to the singing beyond be not deaf," he said to us, when we were near him; whereat I became such, on hearing him, as is he who is put into the pit. I bent forward over my clasped hands, gazing at the fire and vividly imagining human bodies once seen burned.

The good escorts turned to me, and Virgil said to me, "My son, here may be torment, but not death. Remember, remember . . . and if on Geryon I guided you safely, what shall I do now nearer to God? Be well assured that if within the belly of this flame you should stay full a thousand years, it could not make you bald of one hair. And if perchance you think that I deceive you, go close to it and try it with your own hands on the edge of your garment. Put away now, put away all fear, turn hitherward, come, enter with confidence." And I still adamant and against my conscience.

When he saw me stand there unmoved and stubborn, he said, a little vexed, "Now see, son, between Beatrice and you is this wall."

As at the name of Thisbe, Pyramus, at the point of death, opened his eyelids and looked at her, when the mulberry turned red, so, my stubbornness being softened, I turned to the wise leader when I heard the name which ever springs up in my mind; at which he shook his head and said, "What? Do we desire to stay on this side?" then smiled as one does to a child that is won with an apple.

Then he entered into the fire in front of me, asking Statius, who for a long way had been between us, to come behind.

As soon as I was in it I would have flung myself into molten glass to cool me, so without measure was the burning there. My sweet father, to encourage me, went on discoursing of Beatrice, saying, "Already I seem to behold her eyes." A voice was guiding us, which was singing on the other side; and we, ever attentive to it, came forth where the ascent began. "*Venite, benedicti Patris mei*," sounded from within a light that was there, such that it overcame me and I could not look on it. "The sun is sinking," it added, "and the evening comes; do not stop, but hasten your steps before the west grows dark."

The way went straight up through the rock in such a direction that I was intercepting before me the rays of the sun, which was now low. And of few steps had we made assay when I and my sages perceived, by the shadow which had vanished, that the sun had set behind us. And before the horizon in all its vast range had become of one hue, and night held all her dominions, each of us made his bed of a step, for the law of the mountain took from us the strength as well as the desire to climb farther.

As goats, which have been swift and wayward on the peaks before they are fed, become tranquil as they ruminate,

silent in the shade while the sun is hot, guarded by the shepherd who leans upon his staff and tends their repose; and as the herdsman, who lodges out of doors, passes the night beside his quiet flock, watching lest a wild beast scatter it, such were we then all three, I as a goat and they as shepherds, bounded by the high rock on this side and on that. Little of the outside could be seen there, but through that little I saw the stars brighter and larger than their wont. As I was thus ruminating, and thus gazing at them, sleep fell on me, sleep which often knows the news before the event.

In the hour, I think, when Cytherea, who seems always burning with the fire of love, first shone on the mountain from the east, I seemed to see in a dream a lady young and beautiful going through a meadow gathering flowers and, singing, she was saying, "Whoso asks my name, let him know that I am Leah, and I go moving my fair hands around to make myself a garland. To please me at the glass I adorn me here, but my sister Rachel never leaves her mirror and sits all day. She is fain to behold her fair eyes, as I am to deck me with my hands: she with seeing, I with doing am satisfied."

And now before the splendors which precede the dawn, and rise the more welcome to pilgrims as, returning, they lodge less far from home, the shades of night fled away on every side, and my sleep with them; whereupon I rose, seeing the great masters already risen.

"That sweet fruit which the care of mortals goes seeking on so many branches, this day shall give your hungerings peace." Such were Virgil's words to me, and never were there gifts that could be equal in pleasure to these. Such wish upon wish came to me to be above, that at every step thereafter I felt my feathers growing for the flight.

When all the stair was sped beneath us and we were on the topmost step, Virgil fixed his eyes on me and said, "The temporal fire and the eternal you have seen, my son, and are come to a part where I of myself discern no farther onward. I have brought you here with understanding and with art. Take henceforth your own pleasure for your guide. Forth you are from the steep ways, forth from the narrow. See the sun that shines on your brow, see the tender grass, the flowers, the shrubs, which here the earth of itself alone produces: till the beautiful eyes come rejoicing which weeping made me come to you, you may sit or go among them.

No longer expect word or sign from me. Free, upright, and whole is your will, and it would be wrong not to act according to its pleasure; wherefore I crown and miter you over yourself."

CANTO XXVIII

EAGER now to search within and round about the divine forest green and dense, which tempered the new day to my eyes, without waiting longer I left the bank, taking the level ground very slowly over the soil that everywhere gives forth fragrance. A sweet breeze that had no variation in itself was striking on my brow with the force only of a gentle wind, by which the fluttering boughs all bent freely toward the quarter where the holy mountain casts its first shadow; yet were they not so deflected from their upright state that the little birds among the tops ceased practicing all their arts, but singing they greeted the morning hours with full joy among the leaves, which kept such burden to their rhymes

as gathers from branch to branch through the pine forest on Chiassi's shore when Aeolus lets forth Sirocco.

Now my slow steps had carried me on into the ancient wood so far that I could not see back to where I had entered it, when lo, a stream took from me further progress, which with its little waves was bending leftwards the grass that grew on its bank. All the waters which here are purest would seem to have some defilement in them, compared with that, which conceals nothing, although it flows quite dark under the perpetual shade, which never lets sun or moon beam enter there.

With feet I stayed and with my eyes I passed to the other side of the rivulet to look at the great variety of the fresh-flowering boughs; and there appeared to me there, as appears of a sudden a thing that for wonder drives away every other thought, a lady all alone, who went singing and culling flower from flower, with which all her path was painted.

"Pray, fair lady, who do warm yourself at love's beams, if I may believe outward looks which are wont to be testimony of the heart," I said to her, "may it please you to draw forward to this stream so near that I may understand what you sing.

You make me recall where and what Proserpine was at the time her mother lost her, and she the spring."

As in a dance a lady turns with feet close to the ground and to each other, and hardly sets foot before foot, she turned upon the red and yellow flowerlets toward me, like a virgin that lowers her modest eyes, and gave satisfaction to my prayer, drawing so near that the sweet sound reached me with its meaning. As soon as she was there where the grass was just bathed by the waves of the fair stream, she bestowed on me the gift of lifting her eyes. I do not believe that so great a light shone forth under the eyelids of Venus, transfixed by her son against all his custom. She was smiling as she stood there on the opposite bank, arranging in her hands the many colors which that high land brings forth without seed. The river kept us three paces apart, but Hellespont where Xerxes passed it—ever a curb on all human pride—did not suffer more hatred from Leander for its swelling waters between Sestos and Abydos than that from me because it did not open then.

"You are newcomers," she began, "and, perhaps, why I am smiling in this place chosen for nest of the human race

some doubt holds you wondering; but the psalm *Delectasti* gives light that may dispel the cloud from your minds. And you that are in front, and did entreat me, say if you would hear more, for I have come ready to all your questions till you are satisfied."

"The water," I said, "and the sound of the forest contend in me with a recent belief in a thing I have heard contrary to this." Whereon she, "I will tell you how that which makes you wonder proceeds from its cause, and I will clear away the mist that offends you.

"The highest Good, who Himself alone does please Himself, made man good, and for good, and gave him this place as an earnest of eternal peace. Through his fault he had short stay here; through his fault he exchanged honest joy and sweet sport for tears and toil. In order that the disturbance which the exhalations of the water and of the earth (which follow so far as they can the heat) produce below might do no hurt to man, this mountain rose thus high toward heaven, and stands clear of them from where it is locked. Now, because all the air revolves in a circuit with the first circling, if its revolution is not interrupted at any point, such movement strikes upon this height, which is wholly free in the pure air, and this motion causes the forest, because it is dense, to resound;

and the plant, being struck thus, has such potency that with its virtue it impregnates the breeze, and this then in its whirling scatters it abroad; and the rest of the earth, according to its fitness in itself and in its sky, conceives and brings forth from diverse virtues diverse growths. It should, then, not seem a marvel on earth, this being heard, when some plant takes root there without visible seed. And you should know that the holy plain, where you are, is full of every seed, and has in it fruit that yonder is not plucked.

"The water you see springs not from a vein that is restored by vapor which cold condenses, like a stream that gains and loses force, but issues from a fountain constant and sure which by the will of God regains as much as it pours forth freely on two sides. On this side it descends with virtue that takes from one the memory of sin; on the other side it restores the memory of every good deed. Here Lethe, so on the other side Eunoe it is called; and it works not if first it be not tasted on this side and on that. Its savor surpasses every other sweetness. And notwithstanding that your thirst might be fully satisfied even if I disclosed no more to you, I will yet give you a corollary for grace, nor do I think my speech will be less welcome to you if it reaches beyond my promise.

"They who in olden times sang of the Age of Gold and its happy state perhaps in Parnassus dreamed of this place. Here the root of mankind was innocent; here is always spring, and every fruit; this is the nectar of which each tells."

I turned then right round to my poets, and saw that with a smile they had heard these last words; then to the fair lady I turned my face.

CANTO XXIX

SINGING like a lady enamored, she continued, at the end of her words, "*Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata!*" and, like nymphs who used to wend alone through the woodland shades, this one desiring to see and that to avoid the sun, she moved on, then, counter to the stream, going along the bank, and I abreast of her, matching her little steps with mine. We had not taken a hundred between us when the banks made an equal bend in such a way that I faced the East again; nor yet was our way thus very far when the lady turned full round to me, saying, "My brother, look and listen!" And lo! a sudden brightness flooded the great forest on all sides, such that it put me in doubt if it were lightning;

but since lightning ceases even as it comes, and this, lasting, became more and more resplendent, in my thought I said, "What thing is this!" And a sweet melody ran through the luminous air; wherefore good zeal made me reprove Eve's daring, that, there where earth and heaven were obedient, a woman, alone and but then formed, did not bear to remain under any veil, under which, if she had been devout, I should have tasted those ineffable delights before, and for a longer time. While I went on among so many first-fruits of the eternal pleasure, all enrapt, and still desirous of more joys, in front of us the air under the green boughs became like a flaming fire to us, and the sweet sound was now heard as a song.

O most holy Virgins, if hunger, cold, or vigils I have ever endured for you, the occasion spurs me to claim my reward. Now it is meet that Helicon stream forth for me, and Urania aid me with her choir to put in verse things difficult to think.

A little farther on, a delusive semblance of seven trees of gold was caused by the long space still intervening between us and them; but when I had come so near that the common object, which deceives the sense, lost not by distance any of its features,

the faculty that prepares matter for reason made them out to be candlesticks, even as they were, and in the words of the chant "Hosanna." Above flamed the splendid array, brighter by far than the moon in a clear midnight sky in her mid-month. I turned round full of wonder to the good Virgil, and he answered me with a look no less charged with amazement; then I turned my face again to the high things, which moved towards us so slowly that they would have been outstripped by new-made brides. The lady chid me, "Why are you so eager only for the sight of the living lights, and do not heed that which comes after them?" Then I saw people, following as after their leaders, clad in white, and a whiteness so pure never was here. The water was taking in my image on the left, and like a mirror reflected to me my left side if I looked in it. When I was at a point on my bank where only the stream separated me, I held my steps in order to see better, and I saw the flames advance, leaving the air behind them painted, and they looked like moving paint brushes, so that overhead it remained streaked with seven bands in all those colors whereof the sun makes his bow, and Delia her girdle.

These banners went back farther than my sight and, as well as I could judge, the outermost were ten paces apart. Beneath so fair a sky as I describe came four and twenty elders, two by two, crowned with lilies; all were singing, "Blessed art thou among the daughters of Adam, and blessed forever be thy beauties."

When the flowers and the other fresh herbage opposite me on the other bank were left clear of those chosen people, even as star follows star in the heavens, four living creatures came after them, each crowned with green leaves; and each of them was plumed with six wings, the plumes full of eyes, and the eyes of Argus, were they alive, would be such. To describe their forms, reader, I do not lay out more rhymes, for other spending constrains me so that I cannot be lavish in this; but read Ezekiel who depicts them as he saw them come from the cold parts, with wind and cloud and fire; and such as you shall find them on his pages, such were they here, except that, as to the wings, John is with me, and differs from him.

The space within the four of them contained a triumphal chariot on two wheels, which came drawn at the neck of a griffin;

and he stretched upwards one wing and the other between the middle and the three and three bands so that he did harm to none by cleaving. So high they rose that they were lost to sight; he had his members of gold so far as he was bird, and the rest was white mixed with red. Not only did Rome never gladden an Africanus or an Augustus with a chariot so splendid, but even that of the Sun would be poor to it—that of the Sun which, going astray, was consumed at devout Earth's prayer, when Jove in his secrecy was just.

Three ladies came dancing in a round at the right wheel, one of them so ruddy that she would hardly have been noted in the fire; another was as if her flesh and bones had been of emerald; the third seemed new-fallen snow; and they seemed to be led, now by the white, now by the red, and from this one's song the others took their movement fast and slow. By the left wheel four other ladies made festival, clothed in purple, following the measure of one of them that had three eyes in her head.

Behind the whole group I have described I saw two old men, unlike in dress but alike in bearing, venerable and grave: the one showed himself of the household of that great Hippocrates whom nature made for the creatures she holds dearest;

the other showed the contrary care, with a sharp and shining sword, such that on this side of the stream it made me afraid. Then I saw four of lowly aspect; and behind them all an old man coming alone, asleep, with keen visage. And these seven were clad like the first band, but they had no garland of lilies around their heads, rather of roses and of other red flowers: one who viewed them from short distance would have sworn that all were aflame above their eyebrows. And when the chariot was opposite to me, a thunderclap was heard: and those worthy folk seemed to have their further march forbidden, stopping there along with the banners in front.

CANTO XXX

When the Wain of the first heaven, which never knew setting or rising, or veil of other cloud than of sin, and which there made each one aware of his duty, even as the lower wain guides him who turns the helm to come into port, had stopped still, the truthful people, who had come first between the griffin and it, turned to the chariot as to their peace, and one of them, as if sent from Heaven, singing cried thrice, "*Veni, sponsa de Libano*," and all the others after.

As the blessed at the last Trump will rise ready each from his tomb, singing Hallelujah with reclad voice, so upon the divine chariot, *ad vocem tanti senis*, rose up a hundred ministers and messengers of life eternal,

who all cried, "*Benedictus qui venis*" and, scattering flowers up and around, "*Manibus*, oh, *date lilia plenis*."

Sometimes I have seen at the beginning of the day the eastern region all rosy, while the rest of the heaven was adorned with fair clear sky, and the face of the sun rise shaded, so that through the tempering of vapors the eye sustained it a long while: so within a cloud of flowers, which rose from the angelic hands and fell down again within and without, olive-crowned over a white veil a lady appeared to me, clad, under a green mantle, with hue of living flame; and my spirit, which now for so long a time trembling with awe in her presence had not been overcome, without having more knowledge by the eyes, through occult virtue that proceeded from her, felt old love's great power. As soon as on my sight the lofty virtue smote that had already pierced me before I was out of my boyhood, I turned to the left with the confidence of a little child that runs to his mother when he is frightened or in distress, to say to Virgil, "Not a drop of blood is left in me that does not tremble: I know the tokens of the ancient flame."

But Virgil had left us bereft of himself, Virgil sweetest father, Virgil to whom I gave myself for my salvation; nor did all that our ancient mother lost keep my dew-washed cheeks from turning dark again with tears.

"Dante, because Virgil leaves you, do not weep yet, do not weep yet, for you must weep for another sword!"

Like an admiral who goes to stern and bow to see the men that are serving on the other ships, and encourages them to do well, so on the left side of the chariot—when I turned at the sound of my name, which of necessity is registered here—I saw the lady, who first appeared to me veiled under the angelic festival, direct her eyes to me beyond the stream. Although the veil that fell from her head, encircled with Minerva's leaves, did not let her be seen distinctly, royally and ever stern in her mien, she continued, like one who speaks and keeps back the hottest words till the last, "Look at me well: indeed I am, indeed I am Beatrice! How did you deign to climb the mountain? Did you not know that here man is happy?" My eyes fell down to the clear fount, but, seeing myself in it, I drew them back to the grass, so great shame weighed on my brow;

so does the mother seem harsh to her child as she seemed to me, for bitter tastes the savor of stern pity.

She was silent; and the angels of a sudden sang, "*In te, Domine, speravi*," but beyond "*pedes meos*" they did not pass. Even as the snow, among the living rafters upon the back of Italy, is congealed, blown and packed by Slavonian winds, then melting, trickles through itself, if only the land that loses shadow breathes, so that it seems a fire that melts the candle; so was I without tears or sighs before the song of those who ever sing in harmony with the eternal spheres. But when I heard how in their sweet notes they took my part, quite as if they had said, "Lady, why do you so confound him?" the ice that was bound tight around my heart became breath and water, and with anguish poured from my breast through my mouth and eyes.

She, still standing motionless on the aforesaid side of the chariot, then turned her words to the pitying angels thus: "You watch in the everlasting day, so that nor night nor slumber steals from you one step which the world makes along its ways; wherefore my answer is more concerned that he who weeps yonder should understand me, so that fault and grief may be of one measure.

Not only through the working of the great wheels, which direct every seed to some end according as the stars are its companions, but through largess of divine graces, which have for their rain vapors so lofty that our sight goes not near thereto, this man was such in his new life, virtually, that every right disposition would have made marvelous proof in him. But so much the more rank and wild becomes the land, ill-sown and untilled, as it has more of good strength of soil. For a time I sustained him with my countenance: showing him my youthful eyes I led him with me turned toward the right goal. So soon as I was on the threshold of my second age and had changed life, this one took himself from me and gave himself to others. When from flesh to spirit I had ascended, and beauty and virtue were increased in me, I was less dear and less pleasing to him and he turned his steps along a way not true, following false images of good, which pay no promise in full. Nor did it avail me to obtain inspirations with which, both in dream and otherwise, I called him back, so little did he heed them. He fell so low that all means for his salvation were now short, save to show him the lost people.

For this I visited the gate of the dead, and to him who has conducted him up hither my prayers were offered with tears. The high decree of God would be broken if Lethe were passed and such viands were tasted without some scot of penitence that may pour forth tears."

CANTO XXXI

"O you who are on that side of the sacred river," she began again, turning against me the point of her speech, which even with the edge had seemed sharp to me; and continuing without pause, "Say, say, if this is true: to such an accusation your confession must be joined."

My power was so confounded that my voice moved and became extinct before it was set free from its organs. She forebore but little, then said, "What are you thinking? Answer me, for the sad memories in you are not yet destroyed by the water." Confusion and fear, together mingled, drove forth from my mouth a *Yes* such that the eyes were needed to hear it.

As a crossbow breaks its cord and the bow when it shoots with too great tension, and the shaft hits the mark with less force,

so did I burst under that heavy load, pouring forth tears and sighs, and my voice failed along its passage. Wherefore she to me, "Within your desires of me that were leading you to love that Good beyond which there is nothing to which man may aspire, what pits did you find athwart your path, or what chains, that you had thus to strip you of the hope of passing onward? And what attractions or what advantages were displayed on the brow of others, that you were obliged to dally before them?"

After drawing a bitter sigh, I barely had the voice to make answer, and my lips shaped it with difficulty. Weeping I said, "The present things, with their false pleasure, turned my steps aside, as soon as your countenance was hidden."

And she, "Had you been silent, or had you denied that which you confess, your fault would not be less noted, by such a Judge is it known. But when accusation of the sin bursts from one's own cheek, in our court the grindstone turns itself back against the edge. Still, that you may now bear shame for your error, and another time, hearing the Sirens, may be stronger, lay aside the seed of tears and listen: so shall you hear how in opposite direction my buried flesh ought to have moved you.

"Never did nature or art present to you beauty so great as the fair members in which I was enclosed and now are scattered to dust. And if the highest beauty thus failed you by my death, what mortal thing should then have drawn you into desire for it? Truly, at the first arrow of deceitful things you ought to have risen up, following me who was no longer such. Young damsel or other novelty of such brief enjoyment should not have weighed down your wings to await more shots. The young bird waits two or three, but before the eyes of the full-fledged in vain is net spread or arrow shot."

As children stand ashamed and dumb, with eyes on the ground, listening conscience-stricken and repentant, so stood I. And she said, "Since you are grieved through hearing, lift up your beard and you will receive more grief through seeing."

With less resistance is the sturdy oak uprooted, whether by wind of ours or by that which blows from Iarbas' land, than at her command I raised my chin; and when by the beard she asked for my face, well I knew the venom of the argument. When my face was lifted up, my sight perceived those primal creatures resting from their strewing;

and my eyes, still little assured, saw Beatrice turned toward the animal that is one person in two natures. Beneath her veil and beyond the stream she seemed to me to surpass more her former self than she surpassed the others here when she was with us; and the nettle of remorse so stung me there that of all other things, that which had most turned me to love of it became most hateful to me. Such contrition stung my heart that I fell overcome; and what I then became she knows who was the cause of it.

Then when my heart had restored my outward sense I saw above me the lady I had found alone and she was saying, "Cling, cling to me!" She had brought me into the river up to the throat and, drawing me behind her, was moving over the water as light as a shuttle. When I was close to the blessed shore, I heard "*Asperges me*" sung so sweetly that I cannot remember it, far less write it. The fair lady opened her arms, clasped my head and dipped me under, where it behooved me to swallow of the water. Then she drew me forth and led me bathed into the dance of the four fair ones, and each of them covered me with her arm. "Here we are nymphs and in heaven we are stars: before Beatrice descended to the world we were ordained to her for her handmaids.

We will bring you to her eyes; but in the joyous light which is within them the three on the other side, who look deeper, shall quicken yours." Thus they began to sing, then brought me with them to the breast of the griffin, where Beatrice stood turned towards us. "See that you spare not your gaze," they said, "we have placed you before the emeralds from which Love once shot his darts at you."

A thousand desires hotter than flame held my eyes on the shining eyes that remained ever fixed on the griffin. As the sun in a mirror, so was the twofold animal gleaming therewithin, now with the one, now with the other bearing. Think, reader, if I marveled when I saw the thing stand still in itself, and in its image changing.

While my soul, full of amazement and gladness, was tasting of that food which, sating of itself, causes hunger for itself, the other three, showing themselves by their bearing to be of a higher order, came forward, dancing to their angelic roundelay. "Turn, Beatrice, turn your holy eyes upon your faithful one," was their song, "who has moved so many steps to see you. For grace do us the grace to unveil to him your mouth, that he may discern the second beauty which you conceal."

O splendor of living light eternal! Who has ever grown so pale under the shade of Parnassus or drunk so deep at its well, that he would not seem to have his mind encumbered, on trying to render you as you appeared, when in the free air you did disclose yourself, there where in its harmony that heaven overshadows you!

CANTO XXXII

So FIXED and intent were my eyes in satisfying their ten-year thirst, that every other sense was quenched in me; and they themselves had a wall of indifference, on one side and on the other, so did the holy smile draw them to itself with the old net, when my face was turned perforce to my left by those goddesses, for I heard from them a "Too fixedly!" And the condition of the sight that is in eyes just smitten by the sun left me for a time without vision. But after my sight had adjusted itself to the lesser object—lesser, I mean, with regard to the greater from which I was forced to withdraw—I saw that the glorious army had wheeled on its right and was returning with the sun and the seven flames in its face.

As under their shields a troop wheels about to save itself and turns with its standard before it can completely face round, that soldiery of the celestial realm which was in advance had wholly gone past us before the chariot bent round its pole. Then the ladies returned to the wheels and the griffin moved his blessed burden, on such wise however that no feather of him was ruffled. The fair lady who had drawn me at the ford, and Statius and I, were following the wheel that made its turn with the smaller arc, and as we passed through the lofty wood, empty through fault of her who believed the serpent, an angelic song set the time to our steps. Perhaps three flights of an arrow loosed from the string would cover such distance as we had advanced, when Beatrice descended. I heard "Adam" murmured by all, then they encircled a tree stripped of its flowers and of its foliage in every bough. Its branches, which so much the wider spread the higher up they are, would be marveled at for height by the Indians in their woods.

"Blessed art thou, Griffin, that dost not pluck with thy beak from this tree, sweet to the taste, for the belly is ill racked thereby." Thus around the sturdy tree cried the others; and the animal of two natures, "So is preserved the seed of all righteousness";

and turning to the pole which he had pulled, he drew it to the foot of the widowed trunk and that which was of it he left bound to it.

As our plants, when the great light falls downward mingled with that which shines behind the celestial Carp, begin to swell, and then renew themselves, each in its own color, before the sun yokes his coursers under other stars; so, disclosing a hue less than of roses and more than of violets, the tree was renewed that first had its branches so bare. I did not understand the hymn, and it is not sung here, which that company then sang, nor did I bear to hear the music to the end.

If I could portray how the pitiless eyes sank to slumber, hearing of Syrinx, the eyes whose long vigil cost so dear, like a painter who paints from a model I would picture how I fell asleep: but whoso would, let him be one that can depict slumber well. I pass on, therefore, to when I awoke, and tell that a splendor rent the veil of my sleep, and a call, "Arise, what are you doing?"

As when brought to see some of the blossoms of the apple tree that makes the angels greedy of its fruit and holds perpetual wedding feasts in Heaven, Peter and John and James were overpowered, and came to themselves again at the word by which deeper slumbers were broken,

and saw their company diminished alike by Moses and Elias, and their Master's raiment changed, so I came to myself, and saw standing over me that compassionate lady who first had been my guide along the stream; and all in doubt I said, "Where is Beatrice?" And she, "See her beneath the new foliage, seated upon its root; see the company that encircles her: the rest are rising on high behind the griffin, with sweeter song and more profound." And if her speech continued longer I do not know, for already in my eyes was she who had shut me off from every other care. She was sitting there alone on the bare ground, like a guard left there of the chariot which I had seen bound by the biformed animal. In a circle the seven nymphs were making of themselves an enclosure for her, with those lights in their hands that are safe from Aquilo and from Auster.

"Here shall you be short time a forester, and you shall be with me forever a citizen of that Rome whereof Christ is Roman. Therefore, for profit of the world that lives ill, hold your eyes now on the chariot, and what you see, mind that you write it when you have returned yonder." Thus Beatrice; and I, who at the feet of her commands was all devout, gave my mind and my eyes whither she willed.

Never with so swift a motion did fire descend from dense cloud, when it falls from the confine that stretches most remote, as I saw the bird of Jove swoop downward through the tree, rending the bark as well as the flowers and the new leaves, and it struck the chariot with all its force, so that it reeled like a ship in a tempest, driven by the waves, now to starboard, now to larboard. Then I saw leap into the body of the triumphal vehicle a fox that seemed starved of all good nourishment; but my lady, rebuking it for its foul offenses, turned it to such flight as its fleshless bones allowed. Then, from there whence it had come before, I saw the eagle descend into the body of the chariot and leave it feathered with its plumage. And a voice such as issues from a heart that is afflicted came from Heaven, and it said, "O little bark of mine, how ill are you laden!" Then it seemed to me that the earth opened between the two wheels, and I saw a dragon issue therefrom, which drove its tail upward through the chariot, and, like a wasp that retracts its sting, drawing to itself its malignant tail, tore out part of the bottom and made off, all content. What was left was covered again, as live soil with grass, with the plumage, offered perhaps with sincere and kind intent,

and both one and the other wheel were covered with it in less time than a sigh keeps open the mouth. Thus transformed, the holy structure put forth heads upon its parts, three on the pole and one on each corner: the three were horned like oxen, but the four had a single horn on the forehead. Such a monster was never seen before. Secure, like a fortress on a high mountain, there appeared to me an ungirt harlot sitting upon it, with eyes quick to rove around; and, as if in order that she should not be taken from him, I saw standing at her side a giant, and they kissed each other again and again. But because she turned her lustful and wandering eye on me, that fierce paramour beat her from head to foot. Then, full of jealousy and fierce with rage, he loosed the monster and drew it through the wood so far that only of that he made a shield from me for the harlot and for the strange beast.

CANTO XXXIII

"*Deus, venerunt gentes,*" the ladies began, alternating, now three now four, a sweet psalmody, and weeping. And Beatrice, sighing and compassionate, was listening to them, so moved that little more did Mary change at the Cross. But when the other virgins gave place to her to speak, uprisen erect on her feet, she answered, colored like fire, "*Modicum et non videbitis me, et iterum*, my beloved sisters, *modicum et vos videbitis me.*" Then she set all the seven in front of her; and behind her, merely beckoning, she placed me and the lady and the sage who remained. Thus she went on, and I do not think she had taken the tenth step on the ground when with her eyes she smote on mine,

and with tranquil look said to me, "Come more quickly, so that if I speak with you, you be well placed to listen to me." As soon as I was with her, as it was my duty to be, she said to me, "Brother, why, coming now with me, do you not venture to ask of me?"

As with those who with excessive reverence are speaking in the presence of their superiors so that they do not bring the voice whole to their lips, so it was with me, and without full utterance I began, "My lady, my need you know and that which is good for it." And she to me, "From fear and from shame I wish that you henceforth divest yourself, so that you may no more speak like one who is dreaming. Know that the vessel which the serpent broke was, and is not: but let him whose fault it is believe that God's vengeance fears no hindrance. Not for all time shall be without an heir the eagle that left its feathers on the chariot, whereby it became a monster and then a prey: for I see surely, and therefore I tell of it, stars already close at hand, secure from all check and hindrance, that shall bring us a time wherein a Five Hundred, Ten, and Five, sent by God, shall slay the thievish woman, with that giant who sins with her. And perhaps my prophecy, obscure as Themis and Sphinx, persuades you less because, after their fashion, it darkens your mind;

but soon the facts shall be the Naiads that will solve this hard enigma, without loss of flocks or of harvest. Do you note, and even as these words are uttered by me, so teach them to those who live the life that is a race to death; and have in mind, when you write them, not to hide what you have seen of the tree which has now twice over been despoiled here. Whosoever robs that tree, or rends it, offends with blasphemy of act against God, who for His own sole use created it holy. For tasting of that tree the first soul longed in pain and in desire five thousand years and more for Him who punished on Himself that taste. Your wit sleeps if it deem not that for a special reason it is of such loftiness and thus inverted at its top; and if your vain thoughts had not been as water of Elsa round about your mind, and their pleasantness as Pyramus to the mulberry, by so many circumstances only you would recognize, in the moral sense, the justice of God in the interdict on the tree. But since I see you turned to stone in your mind, and stonelike, such in hue that the light of my word dazes you, I would also have you bear it away within you—and if not written, at least depicted—for the reason that the pilgrim's staff is brought back wreathed with palm."

And I, "Even as wax under the seal, that does not change the imprinted figure, my brain is now stamped by you; but why do your longed-for words soar so far beyond my sight, that the more it strains the more it loses them?"

"In order that you may know," she said, "that school which you have followed, and may see if its teaching can follow my word, and see your way so far distant from the divine way, as the heaven that highest spins is remote from earth."

Whereon I answered her, "I do not remember that I ever estranged me from you, nor have I conscience thereof that gnaws me."

"And if you cannot remember it," smiling she replied, "bethink you now how you have drunk of Lethe this very day; and if from smoke fire is argued, this forgetfulness clearly proves fault in your will elsewhere intent. But henceforth my words shall be as simple as may be needful to make them plain to your rude sight."

Now more refulgent and with slower steps the sun held the meridian circle, which shifts here and there with the point of view, when, just as one going before a company for escort, stops if he comes on some strange thing or traces thereof,

the seven ladies stopped at the edge of a pale shade, such as beneath green leaves and dark boughs the mountains cast over their cold streams. In front of them it seemed to me I saw Euphrates and Tigris issue from one fountain, and, like friends, slowly part from one another.

"O light, O glory of the human race, what water is this that pours here from one source and from itself withdraws itself?" To my question she replied, "Ask Matelda to tell you." And here the beautiful lady answered, as one freeing herself from blame, "This and other things I have told him, and I am certain that Lethe's water did not hide it from him."

And Beatrice, "Perhaps some greater care, which often robs the memory, has darkened the eyes of his mind. But see Eunoe that flows forth there: bring him thereto, and, as you are wont, revive his weakened faculties."

As a gentle spirit that makes no excuse, but makes its will of another's will, as soon as that is disclosed by outward sign, so the fair lady, after I was taken by her, moved on, and with womanly grace said to Statius, "Come with him."

If, reader, I had greater space for writing, I would yet partly sing the sweet draught which never would have sated me;

but since all the pages ordained for this second canticle are filled, the curb of art lets me go no further. I came forth from the most holy waves, renovated even as new trees renewed with new foliage, pure and ready to rise to the stars.

BOOK III
PARADISE
CANTO I

THE GLORY of the All-Mover penetrates through the universe and reglows in one part more, and in another less. I have been in the heaven that most receives of His light, and have seen things which whoso descends from up there has neither the knowledge nor the power to relate, because, as it draws near to its desire, our intellect enters so deep that memory cannot go back upon the track. Nevertheless, so much of the holy kingdom as I could treasure up in my mind shall now be the matter of my song.

O good Apollo, for this last labor make me such a vessel of your worth as you require for granting your beloved laurel. Thus far the one peak of Parnassus has sufficed me, but now I have need of both, as I enter the arena that remains.

Enter into my breast and breathe there as when you drew Marsyas from the sheath of his limbs. O divine Power, if you do so lend yourself to me that I may show forth the image of the blessed realm which is imprinted in my mind, you shall see me come to your beloved tree and crown me with those leaves of which the matter and you shall make me worthy. So rarely, father, are they gathered, for triumph of caesar or of poet—fault and shame of human wills—that the Peneian frond ought to beget gladness in the glad Delphic deity whenever it causes anyone to long for it. A great flame follows a little spark: perhaps, after me, prayer shall be offered with better voices, that Cyrrha may respond.

The lamp of the world rises to mortals through different passages; but through that which joins four circles with three crosses it issues with a better course and conjoined with better stars, and tempers and stamps the wax of the world more after its own fashion. Almost such an outlet had made morning there and evening here, and all the hemisphere there was white, and the other dark, when I saw Beatrice turned to her left side and looking at the sun: never did eagle so fix his gaze thereon.

And even as a second ray is wont to issue from the first, and mount upwards again, like a pilgrim who would return home: thus of her action, infused through the eyes into my imagination, mine was made, and I fixed my eyes on the sun beyond our wont. Much is granted to our faculties there that is not granted here, by virtue of the place made for humankind as its proper abode. I did not endure it long, nor so little that I did not see it sparkle round about, like iron that comes molten from the fire. And suddenly day seemed added to day, as if He who has the power had adorned heaven with another sun.

Beatrice was standing with her eyes all fixed upon the eternal wheels, and I fixed mine on her, withdrawn from there above. Gazing upon her I became within me such as Glaucus became on tasting of the grass that made him sea-fellow of the other gods. The passing beyond humanity may not be set forth in words: therefore let the example suffice any for whom grace reserves that experience.

Whether I was but that part of me which Thou didst create last, O Love that rulest the heavens, Thou knowest, who with Thy light didst lift me. When the revolution which Thou, by being desired, makest eternal turned my attention unto itself by the harmony which Thou dost temper and distinguish,

so much of the heaven seemed to me then to be kindled by the sun's flame that rain or river never made a lake so wide. The novelty of the sound and the great light kindled in me a desire to know their cause, never before felt with such keenness. Whereupon she who saw me as I saw myself, to quiet my perturbed mind, opened her lips before I opened mine to ask, and began, "You make yourself dull with false imagining, so that you do not see what you would see had you cast it off. You are not on earth, as you believe; but lightning, fleeing its proper site, never darted so fast as you are returning to yours."

If by these brief words which she smiled to me I was freed from my first perplexity, within a new one I became the more enmeshed; and I said, "I was already content concerning one great wonder; but now I marvel how it can be that I should pass through these light bodies."

Whereupon, after a pitying sigh, she turned her eyes on me with the look that a mother casts on her delirious child. And she began, "All things have order among themselves, and this is the form that makes the universe like God. Herein the high creatures behold the imprint of the Eternal Worth, which is the end wherefor the aforesaid ordinance is made.

In the order whereof I speak all natures are inclined by different lots, nearer and less near unto their principle; wherefore they move to different ports over the great sea of being, each with an instinct given it to bear it on: this bears fire upwards toward the moon; this is the motive force in mortal creatures; this binds together and unites the earth. And not only does this bow shoot those creatures that lack intelligence, but also those that have intellect and love. The Providence which ordains all this, with Its light makes ever quiet that heaven within which revolves the sphere that has the greatest speed; and thither now, as to a place decreed, the virtue of that bowstring bears us on, which aims at a joyful target whatsoever it shoots.

"To be sure, even as a shape often does not accord with the intention of the art, because the material is deaf to respond, so the creature sometimes departs from this course, having the power, thus impelled, to swerve toward some other part; and even as the fire from a cloud may be seen to fall downwards, so the primal impulse, diverted by false pleasure, is turned toward earth. You should not wonder more at your rising, if I deem aright, than at a stream that falls from a mountain top to the base.

It would be a marvel if you, being freed from hindrance, had settled down below, even as stillness would be in living fire on earth."

Then she turned her gaze heavenwards again.

CANTO II

O YOU that are in your little bark, eager to hear, following behind my ship that singing makes her way, turn back to see again your shores. Do not commit yourselves to the open sea, for perchance, if you lost me, you would remain astray. The water which I take was never coursed before. Minerva breathes and Apollo guides me, and nine Muses point out to me the Bears.

You other few who lifted up your necks betimes for bread of angels, on which men here subsist but never become sated of it, you may indeed commit your vessel to the deep brine, holding to my furrow ahead of the water that turns smooth again. Those glorious ones who crossed the sea to Colchis, when they saw Jason turned plowman, were not as amazed as you shall be.

The inborn and perpetual thirst for the deiform realm bore us away, swift almost as you see the heavens. Beatrice was gazing upward, and I on her; and perhaps in that time that a bolt strikes, flies, and from the catch is released, I saw myself arrived where a wondrous thing drew my sight to it. She, therefore, from whom my thoughts could not be hidden, turned toward me, as glad as she was fair, and "Direct your mind to God in gratitude," she said, "who has united us with the first star."

It seemed to me that a cloud had enveloped us, shining, dense, solid and polished, like a diamond smitten by the sun. Within itself the eternal pearl received us, as water receives a ray of light, itself remaining uncleft. If I was body (and if here we conceive not how one bulk could brook another, which must be if body enters body), the more should longing enkindle us to see that Essence wherein we behold how our nature and God united themselves. There that which we hold by faith shall be seen, not demonstrated, but known of itself, like the first truth that man believes.

I answered, "My Lady, devoutly as I most may, I do thank Him who has removed me from the mortal world.

But tell me, what are the dusky marks of this body which there below on earth cause folk to tell the tale of Cain?"

She smiled a little, and then said to me, "If the judgment of mortals errs where the key of sense does not unlock, truly the shafts of wonder should not prick you henceforth, since even when following after the senses you see that reason's wings are short. But tell me what you yourself think of it."

And I, "That which appears to us diverse here above I suppose to be produced by rare and dense matter."

And she, "Verily you shall see that your belief is plunged deep in error, if you listen well to the argument I shall make against it.

"The eighth sphere displays to you many lights which both in quality and in magnitude can be seen to be of diverse countenances. If rarity and density alone produced this thing, one single virtue, more or less or equally distributed, would be in all. Different virtues must needs be fruits of formal principles, the which, save only one, would be destroyed, according to your reckoning. Further, were rarity the cause of that darkness whereof you make question, either this planet would thus be lacking in its matter quite through and through, or else, just as fat and lean are distributed in a body, it would alternate the pages in its volume.

If the first were the case, this would be manifest in the eclipse of the sun, by the shining through of the light, as it does when it is poured upon any rare matter. This is not so; therefore we must look at the other supposition, and if it chance that I quash that, your opinion will be refuted.

"If it be that this rarity does not pass throughout, needs must there be a limit at which its contrary intercepts its passing farther, and thence that other's ray would be cast back, just as color returns from the glass that hides lead behind itself. Now you will say that the ray shows itself dimmer there than in other parts, because it is reflected there from farther back. From this objection experiment, which is wont to be the fountain to the streams of your arts, may deliver you, if ever you try it. You shall take three mirrors, and set two of them equally remote from you, and let the other, even more remote, meet your eyes between the first two. Turning toward them, cause a light to be placed behind your back which may shine in the three mirrors and return to you reflected from all three. Although the more distant image may not reach you so great in quantity, you will there see it must needs be of equal brightness with the others.

"Now—as beneath the blows of the warm rays the substrate of the snow is left stripped both of the color and the coldness which it had—

you, left thus stripped in your intellect, will I inform with light so living that it shall quiver as you look on it.

"Within the heaven of the divine peace revolves a body in whose power lies the being of all that it contains. The following heaven, which has so many things to show, distributes this being through diverse essences, distinct from it and contained by it. The other circles, by various differentiatings, dispose the distinctions which they have within themselves unto their ends and their sowings. These organs of the universe proceed, as you now see, from grade to grade, for they receive from above and operate downwards. Observe well now how I advance through this pass to the truth which you seek, so that hereafter you may know how to take the ford alone. The motion and the virtue of the holy spheres, even as the hammer's art by the smith, must needs be inspired by the blessed movers; and the heaven which so many lights make beautiful takes its stamp from the profound mind that turns it, and of that stamp makes itself the seal. And as the soul within your dust is diffused through different members and conformed to different potencies, so does the Intelligence deploy its goodness, multiplied through the stars, itself circling upon its own unity.

Divers virtues make divers alloy with the precious body it quickens, wherein, even as life in you, it is bound. Because of the glad nature whence it flows, the mingled virtue shines through the body, as gladness does through a living pupil. Thence comes what seems different between light and light, not from density and rarity. This is the formal principle which produces, conformably with its own excellence, the dark and the bright."

CANTO III

THAT SUN which first had heated my breast with love, proving and refuting had uncovered to me the sweet aspect of fair truth, and, to confess me corrected and assured, I raised my head more erect to speak, in measure as was meet; but a sight appeared which held me so fast to itself, to look on it, that I bethought me not of my confession.

As through smooth and transparent glass, or through clear and tranquil waters, yet not so deep that the bottom be lost, the outlines of our faces return so faint that a pearl on a white brow comes not less boldly to our eyes, so did I behold many a countenance eager to speak; wherefore I fell into the contrary error to that which kindled love between the man and the fountain.

No sooner was I aware of them than, taking them for mirrored faces, I turned round my eyes to see of whom they were, and saw nothing; and I turned them forward again, straight into the light of the sweet guide, whose holy eyes were glowing as she smiled.

"Do not wonder," she said to me, "that I smile at your childish thought, since it does not yet trust itself upon the truth, but turns you, after its wont, to vacancy. These that you see are real substances, assigned here for failure in their vows. Wherefore speak with them and hear and believe, for the true light that satisfies them does not suffer them to turn their steps aside from it."

And I directed myself to the shade who seemed most eager to speak, and I began like a man whom excessive desire confuses, "O well-created spirit, who in the rays of life eternal do taste the sweetness which, if not tasted, is never understood, it would be a kindness to me if you satisfied me with your name and with your lot."

Whereon she, eager and with smiling eyes, "Our charity does not shut the doors against right will any more than that which wills that all Its court be like Itself. In the world I was a virgin sister, and if your memory be searched well, my being more beautiful will not conceal me from you,

but you will recognize that I am Piccarda, who, placed here with these other blessèd ones, am blessèd in the slowest sphere. Our affections, which are kindled solely in the pleasure of the Holy Ghost, rejoice in being conformed to His order. And this lot, which appears so lowly, is given to us because our vows were neglected and void in some particular."

Whereon I said to her, "In your wondrous aspects a something divine shines forth that transmutes you from recollection of former times; therefore I was not quick in calling you to mind, but now that which you tell me helps me so that I more clearly recall your features. But tell me, you who are happy here, do you desire a more exalted place, to see more, and to make yourselves more dear?"

With those other shades she first smiled a little, then answered me so glad that she seemed to burn in the first fire of love, "Brother, the power of love quiets our will and makes us wish only for that which we have and gives us no other thirst. Did we desire to be more aloft, our longings would be discordant with His will who assigns us here: which you will see is not possible in these circles if to exist in charity here is of necessity, and if you well consider what is love's nature.

Nay, it is the essence of this blessed existence to keep itself within the divine will, whereby our wills themselves are made one; so that our being thus from threshold to threshold throughout this realm is a joy to all the realm as to the King, who draws our wills to what He wills; and in His will is our peace. It is that sea to which all moves, both what It creates and what nature makes."

Then was it clear to me how everywhere in Heaven is Paradise, even if the grace of the Supreme Good does not there rain down in one same measure. But as it happens when of one food we have enough and the appetite for another still remains, that this is asked for and thanks are returned for that, so I did with gesture and with speech, to learn from her what was the web through which she had not drawn the shuttle to the end.

"Perfect life and high merit enheaven a lady more aloft," she said to me, "according to whose rule, in your world below, are those who take the robe and veil themselves that they, even till death, may wake and sleep with that Spouse who accepts every vow which love conforms unto His pleasure. From the world, to follow her, I fled while yet a girl, and in her habit I clothed me and promised myself to the way of her order. Then men, more used to evil than to good, snatched me from the sweet cloister: and God knows what then my life became.

"And this other splendor which shows itself to you at my right side, and which is enkindled with all the light of our sphere, understands of herself that which I say of me. She was a sister, and from her head in like manner was taken the shadow of the sacred veil. Yet, turned back as she was into the world, against her will and against right custom, from her heart's veil she was never loosed. This is the light of the great Constance, who bore to the second blast of Swabia the third and final power."

Thus did she speak to me, and then began to sing *Ave Maria*, and, singing, vanished, as through deep water some heavy thing. My sight, which followed her so far as was possible, after it lost her, turned to the mark of greater desire and wholly reverted to Beatrice; but she so flashed upon my gaze that at first my sight endured it not; and this made me the slower with my questioning.

CANTO IV

BETWEEN two foods, distant and appetizing in equal measure, a free man would die of hunger before he would bring one of them to his teeth. So would a lamb stand between two cravings of fierce wolves, in equal fear of both; so would a hound stand still between two hinds. Wherefore, if I was silent, urged in equal measure by my doubts, I neither blame nor commend myself, since it was of necessity.

I was silent, but my desire was depicted on my face, and my questioning with it, in warmer colors far than by distinct speech. Beatrice did what Daniel did, when he lifted Nebuchadnezzar out of the wrath that had made him unjustly cruel, and she said, "I see well how one and another desire so draw you on that your eagerness entangles its own self and therefore breathes not forth.

You reason, 'If right will endures, by what justice can another's violence lessen the measure of my desert?' Further, that the souls appear to return to the stars, in accordance with Plato's teaching, gives you occasion for doubt. These are the questions that thrust equally upon your will. And therefore I will first treat that which has the most venom.

"Of the Seraphim he who is most in God, Moses, Samuel, and whichever John you will —I say, even Mary—have not their seats in any other heaven than these spirits which have now appeared to you, nor have they more or fewer years for their existence; but all make the first circle beautiful, and have sweet life in different measure, by feeling more and less the eternal breath. These showed themselves here, not because this sphere is allotted to them, but to afford sign of the celestial grade that is least exalted. It is needful to speak thus to your faculty, since only through sense perception does it apprehend that which it afterwards makes fit for the intellect. For this reason Scripture condescends to your capacity, and attributes hands and feet to God, having other meaning; and Holy Church represents to you with human aspect Gabriel and Michael and the other who made Tobit whole again.

What Timaeus argues about the souls is not like this which is seen here, for seemingly he holds what he says for the truth. He says the soul returns to its own star, believing it to have been severed thence when nature gave it for a form. But perhaps his opinion is other than his words sound, and may be of a meaning not to be derided. If he means that the honor of their influence and the blame returns to these wheels, perhaps his bow hits some truth. This principle, ill-understood, once misled almost the entire world, so that it ran astray in naming Jove and Mercury and Mars.

"The other perplexity that troubles you has less of poison, for its malice could not lead you away from me elsewhere. For our justice to seem unjust in mortal eyes is argument of faith, not of heretical iniquity. But since your understanding can well penetrate to this truth, I will make you content as you desire.

"If it be violence when he who suffers contributes nothing to what forces him, these souls would not be excused on that account. For will, if it will not, is not quenched, but does as nature does in fire, though violence wrest it aside a thousand times.

For should it bend itself much or little, it follows force: and thus did these when they had power to return to the holy place. If their will had remained whole, such as held Lawrence on the grid and made Mucius severe to his own hand, it would have urged them back, so soon as they were loosed, by the road along which they had been dragged—but such sound will is all too rare. And by these words, if you have gathered them up as you should, is the argument quashed that would have troubled you yet many times.

"But now across your path another strait confronts your eyes, such that you would not get through it by yourself before you would be exhausted. I have put it in your mind for certain that a soul in bliss cannot lie, since it is always near the Primal Truth; and then you could hear from Piccarda that Constance kept her love for the veil, so that here she seems to contradict me. Many a time ere now, brother, has it happened that unwillingly, in order to escape from danger, that was done which ought not to have been done; even as Alcmeon who, urged thereto by his father, slew his own mother, and, so as not to fail in piety, became pitiless. At this point I would have you realize that force mixes with the will, and they so act that the offenses cannot be excused.

Absolute will does not consent to the wrong, but the will consents thereto in so far as it fears, by drawing back, to fall into greater trouble. Therefore, when Piccarda says this, she means it of the absolute will, and I of the other; so that we both speak truth together."

Such was the rippling of the holy stream which issued forth from the Fount from which springs every truth, and such it set at rest one and the other desire.

"O beloved of the First Lover, O divine one," said I then, "whose speech overflows me and warms me so that it quickens me more and more, not all the depth of my affection is sufficient to render to you grace for grace; but may He who sees and can answer thereto. Well do I see that never can our intellect be wholly satisfied unless that Truth shine on it, beyond which no truth has range. Therein it rests, as a wild beast in his lair, so soon as it has reached it; and reach it it can, else every desire would be in vain. Because of this, questioning springs up like a shoot, at the foot of the truth; and this is nature which urges us to the summit, from height to height. It is this, Lady, that invites and emboldens me to question you with reverence of another truth which is obscure to me. I wish to know if man can so satisfy you for broken vows, with other goods, as not to weigh too short upon your scales."

Beatrice looked on me with eyes so full of the sparkling of love and so divine that my power, vanquished, took flight, and I almost lost myself with eyes downcast.

CANTO V

"If I flame on you in the warmth of love beyond the measure that is seen on earth and so vanquish the power of your eyes, do not marvel, for it comes from perfect vision which, according as it apprehends, so does it move its foot to the apprehended good. Well do I note how in your intellect already is shining the eternal light which, seen, alone and always kindles love; and if aught else seduce your love, it is naught save some vestige of that light, ill-recognized, which therein shines through. You wish to know if for an unfulfilled vow so much can be paid with other service as may secure the soul from suit."

So Beatrice began this canto, and as one who does not interrupt his speech, she thus continued her holy discourse, "The greatest gift which God in His bounty bestowed in creating, and the most conformed to His own goodness and that which He most prizes,

was the freedom of the will, with which the creatures that have intelligence, they all and they alone, were and are endowed. Now, if you argue from this, the high worth of the vow will appear to you, if it be such that God consents when you consent; for in establishing the compact between God and man, this treasure becomes the sacrifice, such as I pronounce it, and that by its own act. What then can be given in compensation? If you think to make good use of that which you have offered, you seek to do good with ill-gotten gains. *22-51*

"You are now assured as to the greater point; but since Holy Church gives dispensation in this matter, which seems contrary to the truth I have declared to you, it behooves you to sit a while longer at table, for the tough food which you have taken requires still some aid for your digestion. Open your mind to that which I reveal to you, and fix it therewithin; for to have heard without retaining makes not knowledge.

"Two things constitute the essence of this sacrifice: the first is that in respect to which it is made, and the other is the covenant itself. This last is never canceled save by being kept, and concerning this was my preceding speech so precise. Therefore it was imperative upon the Hebrews to offer sacrifice in any case, though the thing offered might sometimes be changed, as you should know.

The other, which is known to you as the matter, may indeed be such that there is no fault if it be exchanged for other matter. But let no one shift the load upon his shoulder at his own judgment, without the turning of both the white and the yellow key; and let him hold all changing folly unless the thing laid down be not contained in that which is taken up, as four in six. Therefore, whatever thing weighs so much through its own worth as to tip every scale cannot be made good by any other outlay.

"Let mortals never take the vow in sport. Be faithful, and with that be not perverse, as was Jephthah in his first offering, who ought rather to have said 'I did amiss,' than, by keeping his vow, to do worse. And you can find the great leader of the Greeks in like manner foolish, wherefore Iphigenia wept that her face was fair, and made weep for her both the simple and the wise who heard the tale of such a rite. Be graver, you Christians, in moving. Be not like a feather to every wind, and think not that every water may cleanse you. You have the New Testament and the Old, and the Shepherd of the Church, to guide you: let this suffice for your salvation. If evil greed cry aught else to you, be you men, and not silly sheep, so that the Jew among you may not laugh at you.

Be not like the lamb that leaves its mother's milk and, silly and wanton, fights with itself at its own pleasure."

Thus Beatrice to me, even as I write; then she turned full of longing to that part where the universe is most alive. Her silence and her changed look imposed silence on my eager mind, which already had new questionings before it. And as an arrow that strikes the target before the bowcord is quiet, so we sped into the second realm. Here I beheld my lady so glad, when she passed into that heaven's light, that the planet itself became the brighter for it; and if the star changed and smiled, what did I become, who by my very nature am subject to every kind of change?

As in a fish-pool that is still and clear the fish draw to that which comes in such manner from without that they deem it something they can feed on, so did I see full more than a thousand splendors draw towards us, and in each was heard, "Lo one who shall increase our loves!" And, as each came up to us, the shade was seen full of joy, by the bright effulgence that issued from it.

Think, reader, if this beginning went no further, how you would feel an anguished craving to know more,

and by yourself you will see what my desire was, to hear of their conditions from them, as soon as they became manifest to my eyes.

"O happy-born, to whom Grace concedes to see the thrones of the eternal triumph before you leave your time of warfare, we are enkindled by the light that ranges through all heaven; therefore, if you desire to draw light from us, sate yourself at your own pleasure." Thus was it said to me by one of those devout spirits; and by Beatrice, "Speak, speak securely, and trust even as to gods."

"I see well how you do nest yourself in your own light, and that you dart it from your eyes, because it sparkles when you smile; but I know not who you are, nor why, O worthy spirit, you have your rank in the sphere that is veiled to mortals by another's rays." This I said, turned toward the light which first had spoken to me; whereon it glowed far brighter than before. Even as the sun, which, when the heat has consumed the tempering of the dense vapors, conceals itself by excess of light, so, by reason of more joy, the holy figure hid itself from me within its own radiance and, thus close enclosed, it answered me in such fashion as the next canto sings.

CANTO VI

"AFTER CONSTANTINE turned back the Eagle counter to the course of the heavens which it had followed behind the ancient who took Lavinia to wife, a hundred and a hundred years and more the bird of God abode on Europe's limit, near to the mountains from which it first had issued; and there it governed the world beneath the shadow of its sacred wings, from hand to hand, until by succeeding change it came into mine. I was Caesar, and am Justinian, who, by will of the Primal Love which I feel, removed from among the laws what was superfluous and vain. And before I had put my mind to this work, one nature and no more I held to be in Christ, and with that faith I was content; but the blessed Agapetus, who was the supreme pastor, directed me to the true faith by his words.

I believed him, and what he held by faith I now see as clearly as you see that every contradiction is both false and true. So soon as with the Church I moved my feet, it pleased God, of His grace, to inspire me with this high task, and I gave myself entirely to it, committing arms to my Belisarius, with whom Heaven's right hand was so joined that it was a sign for me to rest from them.

"Here ends, then, my answer to the first question; but its condition constrains me to add a certain sequel to it, in order that you may see with how much reason they move against the sacred standard, both those that take it for their own and those that oppose it. See what great virtue made it worthy of reverence, beginning from the hour when Pallas died to give it sway. You know that it made its stay in Alba for three hundred years and more, till at the end, when the three fought against the three for it still. And you know what it did, through seven kings, from the wrong of the Sabine women down to the woe of Lucretia, conquering the neighboring peoples round about. You know what it did when borne by the illustrious Romans against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, and against the rest, princes and governments; whence Torquatus and Quinctius, named from his neglected locks, the Decii and the Fabii, acquired the fame which I gladly embalm.

It cast down the pride of the Arabs that followed Hannibal across the Alpine rocks whence, Po, you do fall. Under it, Scipio and Pompey triumphed, while yet in their youth, and to that hill beneath which you were born it showed itself bitter. Afterward, near the time when all Heaven willed to bring the world to its own state of peace, Caesar, by the will of Rome, laid hold of it; and what it did from the Var even to the Rhine, the Isere beheld, and the Loire and the Seine beheld, and every valley whence Rhone is filled. What it did after it came forth from Ravenna and leaped the Rubicon was of such flight as no tongue nor pen might follow. Towards Spain it wheeled the host, then towards Durazzo, and did so smite Pharsalia that grief was felt on the burning Nile. It saw again Antandros and the Simois, whence it had set forth, and there where Hector lies; and then it shook itself again—the worse for Ptolemy. From there it fell like lightning on Juba, then turned to your west, where it heard Pompey's trumpet. Of what it wrought with the succeeding marshal, Brutus and Cassius howl in Hell, and Modena and Perugia were doleful. Because of it sad Cleopatra is still weeping who, fleeing before it, took from the viper sudden and black death.

With him it coursed far as the Red Sea Shore; with him it set the world in such peace that Janus's temple was locked.

"But what the standard that makes me speak had done before, and after was to do throughout the mortal realm subject unto it, becomes in appearance little and obscure if it be looked on in the hand of the third Caesar with clear eye and pure affection; because the living Justice which inspires me granted to it, in his hand of whom I speak, the glory of doing vengeance for Its own wrath. Now marvel here at what I unfold to you: afterwards it sped with Titus to do vengeance for the vengeance of the ancient sin. Then, when the Lombard tooth bit Holy Church, under its wings Charlemagne, conquering, succored her.

"Now you may judge of such as I accused but now, and of their offenses, which are the cause of all your ills. The one opposes to the public standard the yellow lilies, and the other claims it for a party, so that it is hard to see which offends the most. Let the Ghibellines, let them practise their art under another ensign, for this one he ever follows ill who cleaves justice from it. And let not this new Charles strike it down with his Guelphs, but let him fear talons which have stripped the hide from a greater lion.

Many a time ere now the sons have wept for the sin of the father; and let him not believe that God will change arms for his lilies.

"This little star is adorned with good spirits who have been active in order that honor and fame might come to them. And when desires, thus deviating, tend thitherward, the rays of true love must needs mount upwards less living. But in the equal measure of our rewards with our desert is part of our joy, because we see them neither less nor greater. Hereby the living Justice makes our affection so sweet within us that it can never be bent aside to any evil. Diverse voices make sweet music, so diverse ranks in our life render sweet harmony among these wheels.

"And within this present pearl shines the light of Romeo, whose noble and beautiful work was ill rewarded; but the Provençals who wrought against him have not the laugh, and indeed he takes an ill path who makes harm for himself of another's good work. Raymond Berenger had four daughters, each of them a queen, and Romeo, a man of lowly birth and a pilgrim, did this for him. And then crooked words moved him to demand a reckoning of this just man, who had rendered him seven and five for ten.

Thereon he departed, poor and old, and if the world but knew the heart he had while begging his bread morsel by morsel, much as it praises him it would praise him more."

CANTO VII

"*Hosanna, sanctus Deus sabaòth,*
superillustrans claritate tua
felices ignes horum malacòth!"

—so, revolving to his melody I saw that substance sing, on whom a double light is twinned; and he and the others moved in their dance, and like swiftest sparks veiled themselves from me by sudden distance. I was in doubt, and was saying to myself, "Speak to her, speak to her," I was saying, "speak to her, to my lady who slakes my thirst with her sweet distillings!" But that reverence which is wholly mistress of me, only by *Be* and by *ice*, bowed me like one who drowses. Short while did Beatrice suffer me thus, and she began, irradiating me with a smile such as would make a man happy in the fire,

"By my judgment, which cannot err, how just vengeance could be justly avenged, has set you pondering; but I will quickly free your mind, and do you listen, for my words will make you the gift of a great doctrine.

"By not enduring for his own good a curb upon the power that wills, that man who never was born, in damning himself damned all his progeny; wherefore the human race lay sick down there for many centuries in great error, until it pleased the word of God to descend where He, by the sole act of His eternal love, united with Himself in person the nature which had estranged itself from its Maker.

"Turn your sight now to that which now I say: this nature, which was thus united to its Maker, was, when it was created, pure and good; but by its own self it had been banished from Paradise, because it turned aside from the way of the truth and its proper life. The penalty therefore which the Cross inflicted, if it be measured by the nature assumed—none ever so justly stung; also none was ever of such great wrong, if we regard the Person who suffered it, with whom that nature was bound up. Therefore from one act issued things diverse, for one same death was pleasing to God and to the Jews; thereat the earth trembled and Heaven was opened.

No longer, now, should it seem hard to you when it is said that just vengeance was afterwards avenged by a just court.

"But now I see your mind from thought to thought entangled in a knot, from which, with great desire, it awaits release. You say, 'I follow clearly what I hear, but why God willed this sole way for our redemption is hidden from me.' This decree, brother, is buried from the eyes of everyone whose understanding is not matured within love's flame. But inasmuch as at this mark there is much aiming and little discernment, I shall tell why that way was the most fitting.

"The Divine Goodness, which spurns all envy from itself, burning within itself so sparkles that It displays the eternal beauties. That which immediately derives from it thereafter has no end, because when It seals, Its imprint may never be removed. That which rains down from it immediately is wholly free, because it is not subject to the power of the new things. It is the most conformed to it and therefore pleases It the most; for the Holy Ardor, which irradiates everything, is most living in what is most like Itself.

"With all these gifts the human creature is advantaged, and if one fails, it needs must fall from its nobility.

Sin alone is that which disfranchises it and makes it unlike the Supreme Good, so that it is little illumined by Its light; and to its dignity it never returns unless, where fault has emptied, it fill up with just penalties against evil delight. Your nature, when it sinned totally in its seed, was removed from these dignities, even as from Paradise; nor could it recover them, if you consider carefully, by any way except the passing of one of these fords: either that God alone, solely by His clemency, had pardoned; or that man should of himself have given satisfaction for his folly. Fix your eyes now within the abyss of the Eternal Counsel, as closely fastened on my words as you are able. Man, within his own limits, could never make satisfaction, for not being able to descend in humility, by subsequent obedience, so far as in his disobedience he had intended to ascend; and this is the reason why man was shut off from power to make satisfaction by himself. Therefore it was needful for God, with His own ways, to restore man to his full life—I mean with one way, or else with both. But because the deed is so much the more prized by the doer, the more it displays of the goodness of the heart whence it issued,

the divine Goodness which puts its imprint on the world, was pleased to proceed by all Its ways to raise you up again; nor between the last night and the first day has there been or will there be so exalted and so magnificent a procedure, either by one or by the other; for God was more bounteous in giving Himself to make man sufficient to uplift himself again, than if He solely of Himself had remitted; and all other modes were scanty in respect to justice, if the Son of God had not humbled himself to become incarnate.

"Now, to give full satisfaction to your every wish, I go back to explain to you a certain place, that you may see it as clearly as I do. You say, 'I see water, I see fire and air and earth, and all their mixtures come to corruption and endure but little, and yet these things were created things; so that, if what I have said to you be true, they ought to be secure against corruption.'

"The angels, brother, and the pure country in which you are, may be said to be created even as they are, in their entire being; but the elements which you have named, and all things that are compounded of them, are informed by created power. Created was the matter that is in them, created was the informing virtue in these stars that wheel about them.

The soul of every beast and of the plants is drawn from a potentiate compound by the shining and the motion of the holy lights; but your life the Supreme Beneficence breathes forth without intermediary, and so enamors it of Itself that it desires It ever after. And hence you further can infer your resurrection, if you reflect how was the making of human flesh then when the first parents were both formed."

CANTO VIII

THE WORLD was wont to believe, to its peril, that the fair Cyprian, wheeling in the third epicycle, rayed down mad love; wherefore the ancient people in their ancient error not only to her did honor with sacrifice and votive cry, but they honored Dione and Cupid, the one as her mother, the other as her son, and they told that he had sat in Dido's lap; and from her with whom I take my start they took the name of the star which the sun woos, now behind her, now before. I was not aware of rising into it, but of being within it my lady gave me full assurance when I saw her become more beautiful.

And as we see a spark within a flame, and as a voice within a voice is distinguished when one holds the note and another comes and goes,

I saw within that light other lamps moving in a circle more and less swift according to the measure, I believe, of their internal sight. From a cold cloud winds, whether visible or not, never descended so swiftly that they would not seem impeded and slow to one who had seen those divine lights come to us, leaving the circling first begun among the high Seraphim; and within those that appeared most in front *Hosanna* sounded in such wise that never since have I been without the desire to hear it again.

Then one drew nearer to us, and alone began, "We are all ready at your pleasure, that you may have joy of us. With one circle, with one circling and with one thirst we revolve with the celestial Princes to whom you in the world did once say, '*You who move the third heaven by intellection*'; and we are so full of love that, in order to please you, a little quiet will not be less sweet to us."

After my eyes had been raised with reverence to my lady, and she had satisfied them with assurance of her consent, they turned back to the light which had promised so much; and "Say who you are" was my utterance, stamped with great affection; and, how much I saw it increase in size and brightness, through the new joy which was added to its joys when I spoke!

Thus changed, it said to me, "The world held me below but little time; and had it been more, much ill shall be that would not have been. My joy, which rays around me, holds me concealed from you and hides me like a creature swathed in its own silk. Much did you love me, and had good cause; for had I remained below, I would have shown you of my love more than the leaves. That left bank which is bathed by the Rhone, after it has mingled with the Sorgue, awaited me in due time for its lord; so did that corner of Ausonia, down from where Tronto and Verde discharge into the sea, which is skirted by Bari and Gaeta and Catona. Already was shining on my brow the crown of that land which the Danube waters after it has left its German banks. And the fair Trinacria (which between Pachynus and Pelorus, on the gulf most vexed by Eurus, is darkened not by Typhoeus, but by nascent sulphur) would yet have looked to have its kings born through me from Charles and Rudolph, if ill lordship, which ever embitters the subject people, had not moved Palermo to shout, 'Die! Die!' And if my brother foresaw this, he would already shun the rapacious poverty of Catalonia, lest it make trouble for him;

for truly it is needful for him or for some other to look to it, lest upon his laden bark a heavier load be laid. His nature—mean descendant from a generous forebear—would need a knighthood that gave not its care to the filling of coffers."

"Because I believe that the deep joy which your words infuse in me is, even as I see it, seen by you, my lord, there where every good has its end and its beginning, it is the more welcome to me; and this also I hold dear, that you discern it gazing upon God. You have made me glad; and so now do you make clear to me (since in speaking you have raised the question in my mind) how from sweet seed may come forth bitter."

Thus I to him; and he to me, "If I can make one truth plain to you, you will hold your face toward that which you ask, as you now hold your back. The Good which revolves and contents all the realm that you are climbing makes its providence become a power in these great bodies; and not only is the nature of things provided for in the Mind which by itself is perfect, but, along with that nature, their well-being; so that whatever this bow shoots falls disposed to a foreseen end, even as a shaft directed to its mark. Were this not so, the heavens which you are traversing would produce their effects in such wise that they would be not works of art but ruins—

and that cannot be, unless the Intelligences that move these stars be defective, and defective also the Primal Intelligence in that it did not make them perfect. Do you wish this truth to be made still clearer to you?"

And I, "No, truly; for I see it to be impossible that Nature should weary in that which is needful."

Whereupon he again, "Now say, would it be worse for man on earth if he were not a citizen?"

"Yes," I replied, "and here I ask for no proof."

"And can that be, unless men below live in diverse ways for diverse duties? Not if your master writes well of this for you." Thus he came deducing far as here, then he concluded, "Therefore the roots of your works must needs be diverse, so that one is born Solon and another Xerxes, one Melchizedek and another he who flew through the air and lost his son. Circling nature, which is a seal on the mortal wax, performs its art well, but does not distinguish one house from another. Whence it happens that Esau differs in the seed from Jacob, and Quirinus comes from so base a father that he is ascribed to Mars. The begotten nature would always make its course like its begetters, did not Divine provision overrule.

Now that which was behind you is before you; but, that you may know that I delight in you, I will have a corollary cloak you round.

Ever does Nature, if she find fortune discordant with herself, like any kind of seed out of its proper region, come to ill result. And if the world there below would give heed to the foundation which Nature lays, and followed it, it would have its people good. But you wrest to religion one born to gird on the sword, and you make a king of one that is fit for sermons; so that your track is off the road."

CANTO IX

AFTER YOUR Charles, fair Clemence, had enlightened me, he told me of the frauds that his seed was destined to suffer, but he added, "Kèep silence, and let the years revolve"; so that I can say nothing except that well-deserved lamentation shall follow on the wrongs done you.

And now the life of that holy light had turned again to the Sun which fills it, as to that Good which is sufficient to all things. Ah, souls deceived and creatures impious, who from such Good turn away your hearts, directing your brows to vanity!

And lo! another of those splendors made toward me and by brightening outwardly was signifying its wish to please me. Beatrice's eyes, fixed on me as before, made me assured of dear assent to my desire.

"Pray, blessed spirit," I said, "afford speedy fulfillment to my wish, and give me proof that what I think I can reflect on you." Whereon the light which was still new to me, from out of its depth where it first was singing, continued, as one rejoicing to do a kindness: "In that region of the depraved land of Italy that lies between the Rialto and the springs of the Brenta and the Piave there rises a hill of no great height, whence once descended a firebrand that made a great assault on the country round. I and he sprang from the same root. I was called Cunizza, and I am refulgent here because the light of this star overcame me. But I gladly pardon in myself the reason of my lot, and it does not grieve me—which might perhaps seem strange to your vulgar herd. Of this resplendent and precious jewel of our heaven which is nearest to me great fame has remained, and before it dies away this centennial year shall yet be fived. See if man should make himself excel, so that the first life may leave another after it! And this the present crowd which the Tagliamento and the Adige shut in considers not; nor yet, though it be scourged, does it repent. But soon it shall come to pass that, because her people are stubborn against duty, Padua at the marsh will stain the waters that bathe Vicenza.

And where Sile joins Cagnano, one lords it and goes with his head high, for catching whom the web is already being made. Feltre shall yet bewail the crime of its impious shepherd, which will be so foul that for the like nobody ever entered Malta. Great indeed would be the vat that should receive the blood of the Ferrarese and weary him that should weigh it ounce by ounce, which this courteous priest will offer to show himself a member of his party—and such gifts will suit the country's way of life. Aloft are mirrors—you name them Thrones—whence God in judgment shines upon us, so that these words approve themselves to us." Here she was silent, and had to me the semblance of being turned to other heeding, by the wheel in which she set herself as she was before.

The other joy, which was already known to me as precious, became to my sight like a fine ruby on which the sun is striking. Through rejoicing, effulgence is gained there on high, even as a smile here; but below, the shade darkens outwardly as the mind is sad.

"God sees all, and into Him your vision sinks, blessed spirit," I said, "so that no wish may steal itself from you. Why then does your voice, which ever gladdens Heaven—together with the singing of those devout fires that make themselves a cowl with the six wings—

not satisfy my longings? Surely I should not wait for your request, were I in you, even as you are in me."

"The greatest valley in which the water spreads from the sea that encircles the world," he then began, "extends its discordant shores so far counter to the sun that it makes meridian of the place where before it made horizon. I was a dweller on that valley's shore, between the Ebro and the Magra, which with short course divides the Genoese from the Tuscan; and with almost the same sunset and sunrise lie Bougie and the city whence I came, which with its own blood once made its harbor warm. Folco the people called me to whom my name was known, and this heaven is imprinted by me, as I was by it: for the daughter of Belus, wronging both Sichaeus and Creusa, burned not more than I, as long as it befitted my locks; nor yet the Rhodopean maid who was deluded by Demophoön, nor Alcides when he had enclosed Iole in his heart. Yet here we repent not, but we smile, not for the fault, which returns not to mind, but for the Power that ordained and foresaw. Here we contemplate the art which so much love adorns, and we discern the good by reason of which the world below again becomes the world above.

"But in order that you may bear away with you all your desires fulfilled which have been born in this sphere, I must proceed yet further. You wish to know who is within this light which so sparkles here beside me as a sunbeam on clear water. Now know that therewithin Rahab is at rest, and being joined with our order, it is sealed by her in the highest degree. By this heaven—in which the shadow that your earth casts comes to a point—she was taken up before any other soul of Christ's triumph. And it was well-befitting to leave her in some heaven as a trophy of the lofty victory which was achieved by the one and the other palm, because she favored Joshua's first glory in the Holy Land—which little touches the memory of the Pope.

"Your city—which was planted by him who first turned his back on his Maker, and whose envy has been so bewept—produces and scatters the accursed flower that has caused the sheep and the lambs to stray, because it has made a wolf of the shepherd. For this the Gospel and the great Doctors are deserted, and only the Decretals are studied, as may be seen by their margins. Thereon the Pope and Cardinals are intent. Their thoughts go not to Nazareth whither Gabriel spread his wings.

But the Vatican and the other chosen parts of Rome which have been the burial place for the soldiery that followed Peter shall soon be free from this adultery."

CANTO X

LOOKING UPON His Son with the love which the One and the Other eternally breathe forth, the primal and ineffable Power made everything that revolves through the mind or through space with such order that he who contemplates it cannot but taste of Him. Lift then your sight with me, reader, to the lofty wheels, straight to that part where the one motion strikes the other; and amorously there begin to gaze upon that Master's art who within Himself so loves it that His eye never turns from it. See how from there the oblique circle which bears the planets branches off, to satisfy the world which calls on them: and were their pathway not aslant, much virtue in the heavens would be vain, and well-nigh every potency dead here below;

and if it parted farther or less far from the straight course, much of the order of the world, both above and below, would be defective.

Now remain, reader, upon your bench, reflecting on this of which you have a foretaste, if you would be glad far sooner than weary. I have set before you; now feed yourself, because that matter of which I am made the scribe wrests to itself all my care.

The greatest minister of nature, which imprints the world with heavenly worth and with its light measures time for us, being in conjunction with the part I have noted, was wheeling through the spirals in which it presents itself earlier every day. And I was with him, but of my ascent I was no more aware than is a man, before his first thought, aware of its coming. It is Beatrice who thus conducts from good to better, so swiftly that her act does not extend through time.

How shining in itself must have been that which was within the sun where I entered it, showing not by color but by light! Though I should call on genius, art, and practice, I could not tell it so that it could ever be imagined; but one may believe it—and let him long to see it. And if our fantasies are low for such a loftiness, it is no marvel, for our eyes never knew a light brighter than the sun.

Such was here the fourth family of the exalted Father who ever satisfies it, showing how He breathes forth, and how He begets. And Beatrice began, "Give thanks, give thanks to the Sun of the Angels who of His grace has raised you to this visible one."

Never was heart of mortal so disposed unto devotion and so ready, with all its gratitude, to give itself to God, as I became at those words. And all my love was so set on Him that it eclipsed Beatrice in oblivion; nor did this displease her, but she so smiled thereat that the splendor of her smiling eyes divided upon many things my mind intent on one.

I saw many flashing lights of surpassing brightness make of us a center and of themselves a crown, more sweet in voice than shining in aspect. Thus girt we sometimes see Latona's daughter when the air is so impregnate that it holds the thread which makes her zone. In the court of Heaven, whence I have returned, are many gems so precious and beautiful that they may not be taken out of the kingdom, and of these was the song of those lights. Let him who does not wing himself so that he may fly up thither await tidings thence from the dumb.

When, so singing, those blazing suns had circled three times round about us, like stars neighboring the fixed poles,

they seemed as ladies not released from the dance, but who stop silent, listening till they have caught the new notes. And within one I heard begin, "Since the ray of grace, by which true love is kindled and which then grows by loving, shines so multiplied in you that it brings you up that stair which none descends but to mount again, he who should deny to you the wine of his flask for your thirst would no more be at liberty than water that flows not down to the sea. You wish to know what plants these are that enflower this garland, which amorously circles round the fair lady who strengthens you for heaven. I was of the lambs of the holy flock which Dominic leads on the path where there is good fattening if they do not stray. He that is next beside me on the right was my brother and my master, and he is Albert of Cologne, and I Thomas of Aquino. If thus of all the rest you would be informed, come, following my speech with your sight, going round the blessed wreath. That next flaming comes from the smile of Gratian who served the one and the other court so well that it pleases in Paradise. The other who next adorns our choir was that Peter who, like the poor widow, offered his treasure to Holy Church.

The fifth light, which is the most beautiful among us, breathes with such love that all the world there below thirsts to know tidings of it. Within it is the lofty mind to which was given wisdom so deep that, if the truth be true, there never rose a second of such full vision. At its side behold the light of that candle which, below in the flesh, saw deepest into the angelic nature and its ministry. In the next little light smiles that defender of the Christian times, of whose discourse Augustine made use. If now you are bringing your mind's eye from light to light after my praises, you are already thirsting for the eighth. Therewithin, through seeing every good, the sainted soul rejoices who makes the fallacious world manifest to any who listen well to him. The body from which it was driven lies down below in Cieldauro, and he came from martyrdom and exile to this peace. See, flaming beyond, the glowing breath of Isidore, of Bede, and of Richard who in contemplation was more than man. This one from whom your look returns to me is the light of a spirit to whom, in his grave thoughts, it seemed that death came slow. It is the eternal light of Siger who, lecturing in Straw Street, demonstrated invidious truths."

Then, like a clock which calls us at the hour when the Bride of God rises to sing her matins to her Bridegroom, that he may love her, in which the one part draws or drives the other, sounding *ting! ting!* with notes so sweet that the well-disposed spirit swells with love, so did I see the glorious wheel move and render voice to voice with harmony and sweetness that cannot be known except there where joy is everlasting.

CANTO XI

O INSENSATE care of mortals! how false are the reasonings that make you beat your wings in downward flight. One was following after the laws, another after the *Aphorisms*, one was pursuing priesthood, and one dominion by force or craft, and another plunder, and another civil business, one was moiling, caught in the pleasures of the flesh, and another was giving himself to idleness, the while, free from all these things, I was high in heaven with Beatrice, thus gloriously received.

After each had come to the point of the circle where it was before, it stayed itself, as the taper in its stand. And within that light which first had spoken to me I heard begin, while it smiled and grew brighter, "Even as I glow with its beams, so, gazing into the Eternal Light, I perceive your thoughts and the cause of them.

You are perplexed and would fain have my words made clearer, in plain and explicit language leveled to your understanding, where I said just now 'where there is good fattening,' and again where I said, 'there never rose a second'; and here is need that one distinguish well.

"The Providence that governs the world with that counsel in which every created vision is vanquished before it reaches the bottom, in order that the Bride of Him who, with loud cries, espoused her with the blessed blood, might go to her Delight, secure within herself and also more faithful to Him, ordained on her behalf two princes, who on this side and that might be her guides. The one was all seraphic in ardor, the other, for wisdom, was on earth a splendor of cherubic light. I will speak of one, because in praising one, whichever be taken, both are spoken of, for their labors were to one same end.

"Between the Topino and the stream that drops from the hill chosen by the blessed Ubaldo, a fertile slope hangs from a lofty mountain wherefrom Perugia feels cold and heat through Porta Sole, while behind it Nocera and Gualdo grieve under a heavy yoke. From this slope, where most it breaks its steepness a sun rose on the world, even as this is wont to rise from Ganges.

Therefore let him who talks of this place not say *Ascesi*, which would be to speak short, but *Orient*, if he would name it rightly. He was not yet very far from his rising when he began to make the earth feel, from his great virtue, a certain strengthening; for, while still a youth, he rushed into strife against his father for such a lady, to whom, as to death, none willingly unlocks the door; and before his spiritual court *et coram patre* he was joined to her, and thereafter, from day to day, he loved her ever more ardently. She, bereft of her first husband, for eleven hundred years and more, despised and obscure, remained unwooed till he came; nor had it availed to hear that he who caused fear to all the world found her undisturbed with Amyclas at the sound of his voice; nor had it availed to have been constant and undaunted so that, where Mary remained below, she wept with Christ upon the Cross.

"But, lest I should proceed too darkly, take now Francis and Poverty for these lovers in all that I have said. Their harmony and joyous semblance made love and wonder and tender looks the cause of holy thoughts; so that the venerable Bernard first bared his feet, following such great peace, and running, it seemed to him that he was slow.

Oh wealth unknown, oh fertile good! Egidius bares his feet, Silvester bares his feet, following the spouse, so does the bride delight them. Then that father and master goes his way, with his lady and with that family which was already girt with the lowly cord. Nor did abjectness of heart weigh down his brow that he was Pietro Bernardone's son, nor for appearing marvelously despised; but royally he opened his stern resolve to Innocent, and had from him the first seal upon his Order.

"After the poor folk had increased behind him, whose wondrous life were better sung in Heaven's glory, then was the holy will of this chief shepherd circled with a second crown by the Eternal Spirit through Honorius. And when, in thirst for martyrdom, he, in the proud presence of the Sultan, had preached Christ and them that followed him, and, finding the people too unripe for conversion and in order not to stay in vain, had returned to the harvest of the Italian fields, then on the harsh rock between Tiber and Arno he received from Christ the last seal, which his limbs bore for two years. When it pleased Him, who had allotted him to such great good, to draw him up to the reward that he had gained in making himself lowly,

to his brethren as to rightful heirs he commended his most dear lady and bade them love her faithfully; and from her bosom the glorious soul chose to set forth, returning to its own realm, and for its body would have no other bier.

"Think now what he was that was a worthy colleague to keep Peter's bark on the right course in the high sea; and such was our Patriarch; wherefore you can see that whoever follows him as he commands freights good merchandise. But his flock has grown so greedy of new fare that it cannot but be scattered through wild pastures; and the farther his sheep, remote and vagabond, go from him, the more empty of milk do they return to the fold. Some of them indeed there are who fear the harm, and keep close to the shepherd, but they are so few that little cloth suffices for their cowls.

"Now if my words have not been faint, if your listening has been intent, if you recall to mind what I have said, your wish will be content in part, for you will see the plant which is whittled away, and you will see what is intended by the correction 'where there is good fattening if they do not stray.' "

CANTO XII

As soon as the blessed flame took to speaking its last word the holy millstone began to turn, and it had not yet made a full circle when a second enclosed it round and matched motion with motion and song with song: song which, in those sweet pipes, as much surpasses our Muses, our Sirens, as a first splendor that which it throws back. As two bows, parallel and like in color, bend across a thin cloud when Juno gives the order to her handmaid—the one without born of the one within, like the voice of that wandering nymph whom love consumed as the sun does vapors—and make the people here presage, by reason of the covenant that God made with Noah, that the world shall never again be flooded;

so the two garlands of those sempiternal roses circled round us, and so did the outer correspond to the inner.

When the dance and all the great festival of both song and flames, light with light, gladsome and benign, stopped together at one instant and with one consent (even as the eyes which, at the pleasure that moves them, must needs be closed and lifted in accord), from the heart of one of the new lights there came a voice which made me seem as the needle to the star in turning me to where it was; and it began, "The love that makes me beautiful draws me to speak of the other leader on whose account such fair utterance is made here concerning mine. It is fit that where one is, the other be brought in, so that, as they warred for one same end, so together may their glory shine.

"Christ's army, which cost so dear to rearm, was moving behind the standard, slow, mistrustful and scanty, when the Emperor who reigns eternally took thought for His soldiery that was in peril, of His grace only, not that it was worthy, and, as has been said, succored His bride with two champions by whose deeds, by whose words, the scattered people were rallied.

"In that region where sweet Zephyr rises to open the new leaves wherewith Europe sees herself reclad,

not far from the smiting of the waves, behind which the sun, after his long course, sometimes hides himself from every man, sits fortunate Calaroga under the protection of the mighty shield whereon the lion is subject and sovereign. Therein was born the ardent lover of the Christian faith, the holy athlete, benignant to his own and harsh to his foes. And his mind, as soon as it was created, was so full of living virtue that in his mother's womb he made her a prophetess. When the espousals were completed at the sacred font between him and the faith, where they dowered each other with mutual salvation, the lady who gave the assent for him saw in a dream the marvelous fruit destined to issue from him and from his heirs, and, that he might in very construing be what he was, a spirit from up here went forth to name him by the possessive of Him whose he wholly was. Dominic he was named, and I speak of him as of the husbandman whom Christ chose to help Him in His garden. Well did he show himself a messenger and familiar of Christ; for the first love manifested in him was for the first counsel that Christ gave. Oftentimes his nurse found him silent and awake upon the ground, as though he would say, 'I am come for this.'

Oh father of him, Felice indeed! Oh mother of him, Giovanna indeed, if this, being interpreted, means as is said!

"Not for the world for whose sake men now toil after him of Ostia and after Thaddeus, but for love of the true manna, in short time he became a mighty teacher, such that he set himself to go round the vineyard, which soon turns gray if the vine-dresser is negligent. And of the seat which once was more benign to the righteous poor—not in itself, but in him who sits on it and degenerates—he asked, not to dispense two or three for six, not for the fortune of the first vacancy, not for *decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei*, but for leave to fight against the erring world for that seed of which four and twenty plants surround you. Then both with doctrine and with will, together with the apostolic office, he went forth like a torrent which a lofty vein presses out, and on the heretical stocks his force struck with most vigor where the resistances were most obstinate. From him there sprang then various streamlets whereby the catholic garden is watered, so that its bushes are more living.

"If such was the one wheel of the chariot in which Holy Church defended herself and won in the field her civil strife,

surely the excellence of the other must be very plain to you, concerning whom, before I came, Thomas was so courteous. But the track made by the topmost part of its rim is derelict; so that there is mould where the crust was. His household, which set out aright with their feet upon his footprints, is so turned about that the forward foot moves to that behind; and soon shall be seen some harvest of the bad tillage, when the tare will complain that the bin is taken from it. Nevertheless, I say, he who should search our volume leaf by leaf might still find a page where he would read, 'I am as I always was'; but it will not be from Casale or from Acquasparta, whence come such to the writing that one shuns it and the other contracts it.

"I am the living soul of Bonaventura of Bagnorea, who in the great offices always put the left-hand care behind. Illuminato and Augustine are here, who were of the first unshod poor brethren that with the cord made themselves God's friends. Hugh of St. Victor is here with them, and Peter Comestor, and Peter of Spain, who down below shines in twelve books; Nathan the prophet, and the Metropolitan Chrysostom, and Anselm, and that Donatus who deigned to set his hand to the first art;

Rabanus is here, and beside me shines the Calabrian abbot Joachim, who was endowed with prophetic spirit.

"The glowing courtesy and the well-judged discourse of Brother Thomas has moved me to celebrate so great a paladin, and with me has moved this company."

CANTO XIII

Let him imagine, who would rightly grasp what I now beheld (and, while I speak, let him hold the image firm as a rock), fifteen stars which in different regions vivify the heaven with such great brightness that it overcomes every thickness of the air; let him imagine that Wain for which the bosom of our heaven suffices night and day so that with the turning of the pole it does not disappear; let him imagine the mouth of that Horn which begins at the end of the axle on which the first wheel revolves—all to have made of themselves two signs in the heavens like that which the daughter of Minos made when she felt the chill of death; and one to have its rays within the other, and both to revolve in such manner that one should go first and the other after;

and he will have as it were a shadow of the true constellation, and of the double dance, which was circling round the point where I was; for it is as far beyond our experience as the motion of the heaven that outspeeds all the rest is beyond the motion of the Chiana. There they sang not Bacchus, and not Paean, but Three Persons in the divine nature, and it and the human nature in one Person. The singing and the circling completed each its measure, and those holy lights gave heed to us, rejoicing as they passed from care to care.

Then the light within which the wondrous life of the poor man of God had been narrated to me broke the silence among the concordant souls, and said, "Since one straw is threshed, since its grain is now garnered, sweet charity bids me beat out the other. You believe that into the breast from which the rib was drawn to form her beautiful cheek whose palate costs dear to all the world, and into that which, pierced by the lance, made such satisfaction, both after and before, that it turns the scale against all fault, whatever of light it is allowed human nature to have was all infused by that Power which made the one and the other; and therefore you wonder at what I said above, when I declared that the excellence which is enclosed in the fifth light never had a second.

Now open your eyes to that which I answer you, and you will see your belief and what I say become in the truth as the center in a circle.

"That which dies not and that which can die are naught but the splendor of that Idea which in His love our Sire begets; for that living light which so streams from its Lucent Source that It is not disunited from It, nor from the Love which is intrined with them, does of Its own goodness collect Its rays, as though reflected, in nine subsistences, Itself eternally remaining One. Thence It descends to the ultimate potentialities, downward from act to act becoming such that finally it makes but brief contingencies; and these contingencies I understand to be the generated things which the moving heavens produce with seed and without it. The wax of these and that which molds it are not always in the same condition, and therefore under the ideal stamp it then shines now more, now less; hence it comes that one same plant, in respect to species, fruits better or worse, and that you are born with diverse dispositions. If the wax were exactly worked, and the heavens were at the height of their power, the light of the whole seal would be apparent. But nature always gives it defectively, working like the artist who in the practice of his art has a hand that trembles.

Yet, if the fervent Love disposes and imprints the clear Vision of the primal Power, complete perfection is there acquired. Thus was the dust once made fit for the full perfection of a living creature, thus was the Virgin made to be with child; so that I approve your opinion that human nature never was, nor shall be, what it was in those two persons.

"Now, if I went no further, 'How, then, was that other without an equal?' would your words begin. But in order that that which is not apparent may clearly appear, consider who he was and the cause which moved him to make request when it was said to him, 'Ask.' I have not so spoken that you cannot plainly see that he was a king, who asked for wisdom, in order that he might be a worthy king; not to know the number of the mover spirits here above, nor if *necesse* with a contingent ever made *necesse*; nor *si est dare primum motum esse*; nor if in a semicircle a triangle can be so constructed that it shall have no right angle. Wherefore, if you note this along with what I said, kingly prudence is that peerless vision on which the arrow of my intention strikes. And if to 'rose' you turn your discerning eyes, you will see it has respect only to kings—who are many and the good are rare.

Take my words with this distinction, and they can stand thus with what you believe of the first father and of our Beloved.

"And let this ever be as lead to your feet, to make you slow, like a weary man, in moving either to the *yes* or the *no* which you see not; for he is right low down among the fools, alike in the one and in the other case, who affirms or denies without distinguishing; because it happens that oftentimes hasty opinion inclines to the wrong side, and then fondness for it binds the intellect. Far worse than in vain does he leave the shore (since he returns not as he puts forth) who fishes for the truth and has not the art. And of this Parmenides, Melissus, Bryson, are open proofs to the world, as are the many others who went on but knew not whither. Thus did Sabellius, and Arius, and those fools who were to the Scriptures like swords, in rendering straight countenances distorted.

Moreover, let folk not be too secure in judgment, like one who should count the ears in the field before they are ripe; for I have seen first, all winter through, the thorn display itself hard and stiff, and then upon its summit bear the rose. And I have seen ere now a ship fare straight and swift over the sea through all her course, and perish at the last as she entered the harbor.

Let not dame Bertha and squire Martin, if they see one steal and one make offering, believe to see them within the Divine Counsel: for the one may rise and the other may fall."

CANTO XIV

FROM THE center to the rim, and so from the rim to the center, the water in a round vessel moves, according as it is struck from without or within. This which I say fell suddenly into my mind as the glorious life of Thomas became silent, because of the likeness which was born of his speech and that of Beatrice, who was pleased to begin thus after him, "This man has need, and does not tell you of it, either by word or as yet in thought, to go to the root of another truth. Tell him if the light wherewith your substance blooms will remain with you eternally even as it is now; and, if it does remain, tell how, after you are made visible again, it can be that it will not hurt your sight."

As when urged and drawn on by increasing delight, those who are dancing in a ring from time to time raise their voices and gladden their motions,

so at that prompt and devout petition the holy circles showed new joy in their revolving and in their marvelous melody. Whoso laments because we die here to live there on high has not seen there the refreshment of the eternal rain.

That One and Two and Three which ever lives, and ever reigns in Three and Two and One, uncircumscribed, and circumscribing all things, was thrice sung by each of those spirits with such a melody as would be adequate reward for every merit. And I heard in the divinest light of the lesser circle a modest voice, perhaps such as was that of the Angel to Mary, make answer, "As long as the feast of Paradise shall be, so long shall our love radiate around us such a garment. Its brightness follows our ardor, the ardor our vision, and that is in the measure which each has of grace beyond his merit. When the flesh, glorious and sanctified, shall be clothed on us again, our persons will be more acceptable for being all complete; wherefore whatever of gratuitous light the Supreme Good gives us will be increased, light which fits us to see Him; so that our vision needs must increase, our ardor increase which by that is kindled, our radiance increase which comes from this.

But even as a coal which gives forth flame, and with its white glow outshines it, so that its visibility is maintained, so shall this effulgence which already surrounds us be surpassed in brightness by the flesh which the earth still covers; nor will such light have power to fatigue us, for the organs of the body will be strong for everything that can delight us."

So sudden and eager both the one and the other chorus seemed to me in saying "Amen," that truly they showed desire for their dead bodies—perhaps not only for themselves, but also for their mothers, for their fathers, and for the others who were dear before they became eternal flames.

And lo! round about and of equal brightness rose a lustre beyond that which was there, like a brightening horizon. And as, at rise of early evening, new lights begin to show in heaven, so that the sight does, and yet does not, seem real, it seemed to me that there I began to perceive new subsistences making a ring beyond the other two circumferences. Oh true sparkling of the Holy Spirit! how suddenly glowing it became to my eyes, which, vanquished, endured it not. But Beatrice showed herself to me so beautiful and smiling that it must be left among those sights which followed not my memory.

Therefrom my eyes regained power to raise themselves again, and I saw myself, alone with my lady, translated to a more exalted blessedness. That I was more uplifted I perceived clearly by the fiery smile of the star which seemed to me ruddier than its wont. With all my heart, and with that speech which is one in all men, I made a holocaust to God such as befitted the new grace; and the burning of the sacrifice was not yet completed in my breast when I knew the offering to be accepted and propitious, for with such a glow and such a ruddiness splendors appeared to me within two rays that I said, "O Helios, who dost so adorn them!"

As, pricked out with greater and lesser lights, between the poles of the Universe, the Milky Way so gleams as to cause even the wise to question, so did those beams, thus constellated, make in the depth of Mars the venerable sign which joinings of quadrants make in a circle. Here my memory outstrips my wit, for that Cross so flashed forth Christ that I can find for it no fit comparison; but he that takes up his cross and follows Christ shall yet forgive me for what I leave untold when he sees Christ flash in that dawn.

From horn to horn and between the top and the base, lights were moving that sparkled brightly as they met and passed;

so we see here, straight and athwart, swift and slow, changing appearance, the motes of bodies, long and short, moving through the ray that sometimes streaks the shade which men with skill and art contrive for their defense. And as viol and harp, strung with many cords in harmony, chime sweetly for one who does not catch the tune, so from the lights that appeared to me there a melody gathered through the cross which held me rapt, though I followed not the hymn. Well I discerned it to be of lofty praise, for there came to me: "Rise" and "Conquer," as to one who understands not, but hears; by which I was so moved to love that till then nothing had bound me with such sweet bonds. Perhaps my word appears too daring, as though slighting the pleasure of the beautiful eyes, gazing into which my longing has repose. But he who considers that the living seals of every beauty have more effect the higher they are, and that I there had not yet turned to them, may excuse me for that whereof I accuse myself in order to excuse myself, and may see that I speak truth; for the holy pleasure is not excluded here, because it becomes the purer as one mounts.

CANTO XV

GRACIOUS WILL, wherein right-breathing love always resolves itself, as cupidity does into grudging will, imposed silence on that sweet lyre and quieted the holy strings which the right hand of Heaven slackens and draws tight. How shall those beings be deaf to righteous prayers, who, in order to prompt me to beg of them, became silent with one consent? Right it is that he should grieve without end who, for the love of what does not endure forever, robs himself of that love.

As, through the still and cloudless evening sky a sudden fire shoots from time to time, moving the eyes that were at rest, and seeming a star that changes place, save that from where it kindles no star is lost, and it lasts but short while;

so, from the horn that extends on the right, there darted a star of the resplendent constellation that is there, down to the foot of that cross; nor did the gem depart from its ribbon, but coursed along the radial strip, and seemed like fire behind alabaster. With like affection did the shade of Anchises stretch forward (if our greatest Muse merits belief), when in Elysium he perceived his son.

"*O sanguis meus, O superinfusa gratia Dei, sicut tibi cui bis unquam celi ianua reclusa?*" Thus that light; wherefore I gave my heed to it, then I turned back my sight to my lady, and on this side and that I was amazed, for in her eyes was blazing such a smile that I thought with mine I had touched the limit both of my beatitude and of my paradise.

Then, a joy to hearing and to sight, the spirit added to his first words things I did not comprehend, so deep was his speech; nor did he conceal himself from me by choice, but of necessity, for his conception was set above the mark of mortals. And when the bow of his ardent affection was so relaxed that his speech descended toward the mark of our intellect, the first thing I understood was, "Blessed be Thou, Three and One, who show such favor to my seed."

And he continued, "Happy and long-felt hunger, derived from reading in the great volume where white or dark is never changed, you have relieved, my son, within this light in which I speak to you, thanks to her who clothed you with plumes for the lofty flight. You believe that your thought flows to me from Him who is First, even as from the unit, if that be known, ray out the five and the six; and therefore who I am, and why I seem to you more joyous than another in this festive throng, you do not ask me. You believe the truth, for the lesser and the great of this life gaze into that mirror in which, before you think, you display your thought. But in order that holy love, in which I watch with perpetual vision, and which makes me thirst with sweet longing, may be the better fulfilled, let your voice, confident and bold and glad, sound forth the will, sound forth the desire, whereto my answer is already decreed."

I turned to Beatrice, and she heard before I spoke, and smiled to me a sign that made the wings of my desire increase. And I began thus, "Love and intelligence, as soon as the first Equality became visible to you, became of one weight for each of you, because the Sun which illumined you and warmed you is of such equality in its heat and light that all comparisons fall short.

But will and faculty in mortals, for the reason that is plain to you, are not equally feathered in their wings, so that I, who am mortal, feel myself in this inequality, and therefore can only give thanks with the heart for your paternal welcome. But I beseech you, living topaz who are a gem in this precious jewel, that you satisfy me with your name."

"O my branch, in whom I took delight only expecting you, I was your root." Thus he began his answer to me, then said, "He from whom your family has its name and who a hundred years and more has circled the mountain on the first ledge, was my son and was your grandfather's father. Truly it is fitting that you should shorten his long toil with your good offices.

"Florence, within her ancient circle from which she still takes tierce and nones, abode in peace, sober and chaste. There was no necklace, no coronal, no embroidered gowns, no girdle that was more to be looked at than the person. Not yet did the daughter at her birth cause fear to the father, for the time and the dowry did not outrun due measure on this side and that. Houses empty of family there were none, nor had Sardanapalus arrived yet to show what could be done in the chamber.

Not yet was Montemalo surpassed by your Uccellatoio, which, as it has been passed in the uprising, so shall it be in the fall. Bellincion Berti have I seen go girt with leather and bone, and his wife come from her mirror with unpainted face. I have seen de' Nerli and del Vecchio content in unlined skin, and their wives at the spindle and the distaff. O happy they! each one of them sure of her burial place, and none as yet deserted in her bed because of France. The one kept watch in minding the cradle, and, soothing, spoke that speech which first delights fathers and mothers. Another, as she drew the threads from the distaff, would tell her household about the Trojans, and Fiesole, and Rome. Then a Cianghella or a Lapo Salterello would have been as great a marvel as Cincinnatus and Cornelia would be now.

"To so reposeful, to so fair a life of citizens, to such a trusty community, to so sweet an abode, Mary, called on with loud cries, gave me, and in your ancient Baptistery I became at once a Christian and Cacciaguida. Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo. My wife came to me from the valley of the Po, and thence was derived your surname.

Afterward I followed the Emperor Conrad, who girt me with his knighthood, so much did I win his favor by good work. I went, in his train, against the iniquity of that law whose people, through fault of the Pastors, usurp your right. There by that foul folk was I released from the deceitful world, the love of which debases many souls, and I came from martyrdom to this peace."

CANTO XVI

O OUR petty nobility of blood! if you make folk glory in you here below where our affections languish, it will nevermore be a marvel to me, since there where appetite is not warped, I mean in Heaven, I myself gloried in you. Truly you are a mantle that soon shrinks, so that if naught be added from day to day, time goes round about you with its shears.

With that *You* which was first used in Rome and in which her family least perseveres, my words began again; at which Beatrice, who was a little withdrawn, smiled and seemed to me like her who coughed at the first fault that is written of Guinevere. I began, "You are my father, you give me full boldness to speak, you so uplift me that I am more than I.

By so many streams my mind is filled with gladness that it rejoices in itself that it can bear this and not burst. Tell me then, dear stock from which I spring, what was your ancestry and what were the years that were reckoned in your boyhood. Tell me of the sheepfold of St. John, how large it was then, and who were the folk within it worthy of the highest seats."

As a coal quickens into flame at the breathing of the winds, so did I see that light glow at my blandishments; and as it became more beautiful to my eyes, so with a voice more sweet and gentle, but not in this our modern speech, he said to me, "From that day on which *Ave* was uttered, to the birth in which my mother, who now is sainted, was lightened of me with whom she had been burdened, this fire had come to its Lion five hundred, fifty, and thirty times to rekindle itself beneath his paw. My ancestors and I were born at the place where the furthest ward is first reached by the runner in your annual game. Let it suffice to hear thus much of my forebears; as to who they were and whence they came hither, silence is more becoming than speech.

"All those able to bear arms who at that time were there, between Mars and the Baptist, were the fifth of the number now living;

but the citizenship, which is now mixed with Campi, with Certaldo, and with Figline, saw itself pure down to the humblest artisan. Oh, how much better it would be that those folk of whom I speak were neighbors, and to have your boundary at Galluzzo and at Trespiano, than to have them within and to endure the stench of the churl of Aguglione, and of him of Signa, who already has his eye sharp for jobbery.

"If the folk who are the most degenerate in the world had not been a stepmother to Caesar, but, like a mother, benignant to her son, there is one who has become a Florentine and is a money-changer and trader, who would have lived on at Simifonti where his own grandfather went a-begging. Montemurlo would still belong to its Counts, the Cerchi would be in the parish of Acone, and perhaps the Buondelmonti in Valdigreve. The intermingling of people was ever the beginning of harm to the city, as to you the food which is loaded on is to the body. And a blind bull falls more headlong than the blind lamb, and oftentimes one sword cuts better and more than five.

"If you regard Luni and Urbisaglia, how they have perished, and how are following after them Chiusi and Senigallia, it will not appear to you a strange thing or a hard, to hear how families are undone, since cities have their term.

Your affairs all have their death, even as have you; but it is concealed in some things that last long, whereas lives are short. And as the revolution of the heaven of the moon covers and uncovers the shores without pause, so Fortune does with Florence; wherefore it should appear no wondrous thing which I shall tell of the great Florentines whose fame is hidden by time. I saw the Ughi and I saw the Catellini, Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, and Alberichi, illustrious citizens, already in decline; and I saw, great as they were ancient, dell'Arca with della Sannella, and Soldanieri and Ardinghi and Bostichi. Over the gate which at present is laden with new felony of such great weight that there will soon be jettison from the bark, were the Ravignani of whose line the Count Guido is descended and whosoever has since taken the name of the high Bellincione. Della Pressa knew already how to rule, and Galligaio had already in his house the hilt and the pommel gilded. Great already were the Vair column, the Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti, Barucci, and Galli, and those that blush for the bushel. The stock from which the Calfucci sprang was already great, and already the Sizii and Arrigucci had been raised to the highest seats.

Oh, how great have I seen those now undone by their pride! and the balls of gold adorned Florence in all her great doings. So did the fathers of those who, whenever your church is vacant, fatten themselves by staying in consistory. The insolent breed that plays the dragon behind him that flees, and to whoever shows his teeth—or else his purse—becomes mild as a lamb, was already on the rise, but of humble stock, so that it did not please Ubertin Donato that his father-in-law afterward should make him their kinsman. Already had Caponsacco descended into the market-place down from Fiesole, and already was Giuda a good citizen, and Infangato. One thing I will tell, incredible and true: the little circuit was entered by a gate named after the Della Pera. Everyone who bears the fair ensign of the great Baron whose name and whose worth the feast of Thomas keeps fresh, from him had knighthood and privilege, although he who fringes it round is siding now with the people. Already there were Gualterotti and Importuni; and the Borgo would still be quiet if they had gone fasting of new neighbors. The house of which was born your weeping, by reason of its just resentment which has slain you and put an end to your glad living,

was honored, both itself and its consorts. O Buondelmonte, how ill for you that you did fly from its nuptials at the promptings of another. Many would be happy who now are sad if God had committed you to the Ema the first time you came to the city! but it was fitting that Florence, in her last peace, should offer a victim to that mutilated stone which guards the bridge.

"With these families, and with others with them, I saw Florence in such repose that she had no cause for wailing. With these families I saw her people so glorious and so just, that the lily was never set reversed upon the staff, nor made vermilion by division."

CANTO XVII

As HE who still makes fathers chary toward their sons came to Clymene to be reassured about that which he had heard against himself, such was I, and such was I perceived to be both by Beatrice and by the holy lamp which already, for my sake, had changed its place. Wherefore my lady said to me, "Put forth the flame of your desire, so that it may issue imprinted well by the internal stamp; not in order that our knowledge may increase through your speech, but that you may learn to tell your thirst, so that one may pour out drink for you."

"O dear root of me, who are so uplifted that, even as earthly minds see that two obtuse angles can not be contained in a triangle, so you, gazing upon the Point to which all times are present, do see contingent things before they exist in themselves.

while I was in Virgil's company, up the mountain that heals the souls, and while descending through the dead world, heavy words were said to me about my future life, though I feel myself truly foursquare against the blows of chance; so that my will would be well content to hear what fortune is drawing near me, because an arrow foreseen comes slower." Thus said I to that same light which had spoken to me before, and, as Beatrice willed, my wish was confessed.

In no dark sayings, such as those in which the foolish folk of old once ensnared themselves, before the Lamb of God who takes away sins was slain, but in clear words and with precise discourse that paternal love replied, hidden and revealed by his own smile, "Contingency, which does not extend beyond the volume of your material world, is all depicted in the Eternal Vision. Yet thence it takes not necessity, any more than from the eyes in which it is mirrored does a ship which is going down the stream. Therefrom, even as sweet harmony comes from an organ to the ear, comes to my sight the time that is in store for you. As Hippolytus departed from Athens, by reason of his pitiless and perfidious stepmother, so from Florence must you depart.

So is it willed, so already plotted, and so shall be accomplished soon by him who ponders upon it in the place where every day Christ is bought and sold. The blame, as always, will follow the injured party, in outcry; but vengeance shall bear witness to the truth which dispenses it. You shall leave everything beloved most dearly; and this is the arrow which the bow of exile shoots first. You shall come to know how salt is the taste of another's bread, and how hard the path to descend and mount by another man's stairs. And that which shall most weigh your shoulders down will be the evil and senseless company with which you shall fall into this vale; which shall then become all ungrateful, all mad and malevolent against you, but, soon after, their brows, not yours, shall redden for it. Of their brutish folly their own conduct shall afford the proof, so that it will be for your fair fame to have made you a party by yourself.

"Your first refuge and first inn shall be the courtesy of the great Lombard who bears the holy bird upon the ladder, and he will have for you such benign regard that, in doing and in asking, between you two, that will be first which between others is the slowest. With him you shall see one who, at his birth, was so stamped by this strong star, that notable shall be his deeds.

Not yet have folk taken due note of him, because of his young age, for these wheels have revolved around him only nine years; but before the Gascon deceives the lofty Henry, some sparks of his virtue shall appear, in his caring naught for money or for toils. His magnificence shall hereafter be so known, that his very foes will not be able to keep silent tongues about him. Look you to him and to his benefits. By him shall many folk be changed, the rich and the beggarly altering their condition. And you shall bear hence written of him in your mind, but you shall not tell it";—and he told things past the belief even of those who shall see them. Then he added, "Son, these are the glosses on what was said to you; behold the snares which are hidden behind but a few circlings. Yet I would not have you envious of your neighbors, since your life shall be prolonged far beyond the punishment of their perfidies."

When by his silence the holy soul showed he had finished setting the woof across the warp I had held out in readiness to him, I began, as he who, in doubt, craves counsel of one who sees and rightly wills and loves, "I see well, my father, how time spurs toward me to give me such a blow as is heaviest to whosoever is most heedless;

wherefore it is good that I arm myself with foresight, so that if the dearest place be taken from me, I lose not all the rest by reason of my songs. Down in the world endlessly bitter, and upon the mountain from whose fair summit my lady's eyes uplifted me, and after, through the heavens from light to light, I have learned that which, if I tell again, will have for many a savor of great bitterness; and if I am a timid friend to the truth, I fear to lose life among those who shall call this time ancient."

The light wherein was smiling the treasure I had found there first became flashing as a golden mirror in the sun, then it replied, "A conscience dark, either with its own or with another's shame, will indeed feel your speech to be harsh. But none the less, all falsehood set aside, make manifest all that you have seen; and then let them scratch where the itch is. For if at first taste your voice be grievous, yet shall it leave thereafter vital nourishment when digested. This cry of yours shall do as does the wind, which smites most upon the loftiest summits; and this shall be no little cause of honor. Therefore only the souls known of fame have been shown to you within these wheels, upon the mountain, and in the woeful valley;

for the mind of him who hears rests not nor confirms its faith by an example that has its roots unknown or hidden, nor for other proof that is not manifest."

CANTO XVIII

ALREADY THAT blessed mirror was enjoying only its own thoughts, and I was tasting mine, tempering the bitter with the sweet, when the lady who was leading me to God said, "Change your thought: consider that I am in His presence who lightens the burden of every wrong."

I turned round at the loving sound of my Comfort, and what love I then saw in the holy eyes I leave here untold; not only because I distrust my own speech, but because of memory, which cannot return on itself so far unless Another guide it. This much of that moment can I retell, that as I gazed upon her my affection was freed from every other desire so long as the Eternal Joy that shone direct on Beatrice satisfied me from the fair eyes with its reflected aspect.

Overcoming me with the light of a smile, she said to me, "Turn and listen, for not only in my eyes is Paradise."

As sometimes here the affection is seen in the countenance if it be such that all the mind is taken up by it, so in the flaming of the holy glow to which I turned I recognized his wish to have some further speech with me; and he began, "In this fifth tier of the tree, which has life from its top and is always in fruit and never sheds its leaves, are blessed spirits which below, before they came to heaven, were of such great renown that every Muse would be rich with them. Look, therefore, upon the horns of the cross: he whom I shall name there will do as in a cloud its swift fire does."

At the naming of Joshua, even as it was done, I saw a light drawn along the cross, nor was the word noted by me before the fact; and at the name of the great Maccabeus I saw another move, wheeling, and gladness was the whip of the top. So for Charlemagne and Roland my intent gaze followed two of them, as the eye follows its falcon as he flies; next William, and Renouard and Duke Godfrey drew my sight along that cross, and Robert Guiscard too.

Then, moving and mingling among the other lights, the soul which had spoken with me showed me how great an artist it was among the singers of that heaven.

I turned to my right side, to see in Beatrice my duty, signified either by speech or by gesture, and I saw her eyes so clear, so joyful, that her aspect surpassed all it had been at other times, even the last. And as from feeling more delight in doing well, a man from day to day becomes aware that his virtue makes advance, so did I perceive that my circling round with the heaven had increased its arc, when I saw that miracle even more adorned. And such change as comes in a moment over the face of a pale lady, when her countenance frees itself from a burden of modest shame, was presented to my eyes when I turned, because of the whiteness of the temperate sixth star which had received me within itself.

I saw in that torch of Jove the sparkling of the love that was there, trace out our speech to my eyes; and as birds, risen from the shore, as if rejoicing together at their pasture, make of themselves now a round flock, now some other shape, so within the lights holy creatures were singing as they flew, and in their figures made of themselves now *D*, now *I*, now *L*.

At first, as they sang, they moved to their own notes; then, as they became one of these characters, they stopped a little and were silent.

O divine Pegasea, who give glory unto men of genius and render them long-lived, as they, through you, the cities and the kingdoms, illumine me with yourself that I may set forth their shapes, as I have them in conception; let your power appear in these brief lines.

They displayed themselves then, in five times seven vowels and consonants; and I took note of the parts as they appeared in utterance to me. *DILIGITE IUSTITIAM* were the first verb and substantive of all the design; *QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM* were the last. Then, ordered in the *M* of the fifth word they stayed, so that Jove seemed silver in that place, pricked out with gold; and I saw other lights descending where the top of the *M* was, and become quiet there, singing, I believe, the Good that draws them to Itself. Then, as on the striking of burning logs there rise innumerable sparks, wherefrom the foolish are wont to draw auguries, so thence there seemed to rise again more than a thousand lights, and mount, some much, some little, even as the Sun which kindles them allotted them; and when each had rested in its place, I saw the head and the neck of an eagle represented by that patterned fire.

He who there paints has none to guide Him, but He Himself does guide, and from Him is recognized that virtue which shapes nests. The rest of the blessed spirits, which at first seemed content to form a lily on the *M*, with a slight motion completed the design.

O sweet star, how many and how bright were the gems which made it plain to me that our justice is the effect of the heaven which you engem! Wherefore I pray the Mind, in which your motion and your virtue have their beginning, that It look on the place whence issues the smoke that dims your radiance, so that once again It may be wroth at the buying and the selling in the temple which made its walls of miracles and martyrdoms. O soldiery of Heaven whom I look upon, pray for all those who have gone astray on earth, following the ill example. Of old it was the wont to make war with swords, but now it is made by taking away, now here now there, the bread which the tender Father bars from none.

But you that write only to cancel, bethink you that Peter and Paul, who died for the vineyard that you are laying waste, are still alive. Though you indeed may say, "I have my desire so set on him who willed to live alone, and who, for a dance, was dragged to martyrdom, that I know not the Fisherman nor Paul."

CANTO XIX

WITH OUTSTRETCHED wings appeared before me the beautiful image which those interwoven souls, joyful in their sweet fruition, were making. Each of them seemed a little ruby on which a ray of sun should glow so enkindled as to reflect it into my eyes. And that which I must now tell, never did voice report nor ink record, nor was it ever comprised by phantasy; for I saw and also heard the beak speaking, and uttering with its voice *I* and *Mine* when in conception it was *We* and *Our*. And it began, "For being just and duteous am I here exalted to that glory which cannot be surpassed by desire; and upon earth have I left such a memory that the wicked people there commend it, but follow not its story."

Thus one sole heat makes itself felt from many embers, even as from many loves one sole sound issued from that image.

And I then, "O perpetual flowers of the eternal bliss, who make all your odors seem to me but one, breathe forth and deliver me from the great fast which has long held me hungering, not finding any food for it on earth. Well do I know that if the Divine Justice makes another realm in heaven Its mirror, yours does not apprehend It through a veil. You know how eager I prepare myself to listen; you know what is that question which is so old a fast to me."

As the falcon which, issuing from the hood, moves his head and flaps his wings, showing his will and making himself fine, such did I see that ensign which was woven of praises of the Divine Grace become, with songs such as he knows who thereabove rejoices. Then it began, "He that turned His compass round the limit of the world, and within it marked out so much both hidden and revealed, could not so imprint His power on all the universe that His word should not remain in infinite excess; and this is certified by that first proud one, who was the highest of all creatures and who, through not awaiting light, fell unripe;

from which it is plain that every lesser nature is too scant a vessel for that Good which has no limit and measures Itself by Itself. Thus your vision, which must needs be one of the rays of the Mind with which all things are replete, cannot of its own nature be of such power that it should not perceive its origin to be far beyond all that is apparent to it. Therefore the sight that is granted to your world penetrates within the Eternal Justice as the eye into the sea; which, though from the shore it can see the bottom, in the open sea it sees it not, and none the less it is there, but the depth conceals it. There is no light unless it comes from that serene which is never clouded, else is it darkness, either shadow of the flesh or its poison.

"Now is laid well open to you the hiding-place which concealed from you the living Justice concerning which you have made question so incessantly. For you said, 'A man is born on the bank of the Indus, and none is there to speak, or read, or write, of Christ, and all his wishes and acts are good, so far as human reason sees, without sin in life or in speech. He dies unbaptized, and without faith. Where is this justice which condemns him? Where is his sin if he does not believe?'

Now who are you who would sit upon the seat to judge at a thousand miles away with the short sight that carries but a span? Assuredly, for him who subtilizes with me, if the Scriptures were not set over you, there would be marvelous occasion for questioning. O earthly animals! O gross minds! The primal Will, which of Itself is good, has never moved from Itself, which is the supreme Good. All is just that accords with It; no created good draws It to itself, but It, raying forth, is the cause of it."

As the stork circles over her nest, when she has fed her young, and as the one which she has fed looks up to her, such became (and I so raised my brows) the blessed image which, impelled by so many counsels, moved its wings. Wheeling it sang and said, "As are my notes to you who understand them not, such is the Eternal Judgment to you mortals."

After those glowing flames of the Holy Spirit became quiet, still in the sign which made the Romans reverend to the world, it began again, "To this realm none ever rose who believed not in Christ, either before or after he was nailed to the tree. But behold, many cry Christ, Christ, who, at the Judgment, shall be far less near to Him than he who knows not Christ;

and the Ethiop will condemn such Christians when the two companies shall be separated, the one forever rich, and the other poor. What may the Persians say to your kings, when they shall see that volume open in which are recorded all their dispraises? There shall be seen, among the deeds of Albert, that which will soon set the pen in motion, by which the Kingdom of Prague shall be made a desert. There shall be seen the woe which he who shall die by a boarskin blow is bringing upon the Seine by falsifying the coin. There shall be seen the pride that quickens thirst, which makes the Scot and the Englishman mad, so that neither can keep within his own bounds. It will show the lechery and effeminate life of him of Spain, and him of Bohemia, who never knew valor nor wished it. It will show the Cripple of Jerusalem, his goodness marked with an *I*, while an *M* will mark the opposite. It will show the avarice and cowardice of him who has in ward the Isle of Fire where Anchises ended his long life; and to give to understand how paltry he is, the writing for him shall be in contractions that will note much in little space. And plain to all shall be revealed the foul deeds of his uncle and his brother, which have dishonored so eminent a lineage and two crowns.

And he of Portugal and he of Norway shall be known there, and he of Rascia, who, to his harm, has seen the coin of Venice.

"Oh happy Hungary, if she no longer allow herself to be maltreated! and happy Navarre, if she arm herself with the mountains which bind her round! And all should believe that, for earnest of this, Nicosia and Famagosta are now lamenting and complaining because of their beast who departs not from the side of the others."

CANTO XX

When he who illumines all the world descends from our hemisphere so that day on every side is spent, the heaven, which before is kindled by him alone, suddenly shows itself again with many lights wherein one alone is shining; and this change in the sky came to my mind when the ensign of the world and of its leaders became silent in the blessed beak; because all those living lights, shining far more brightly, began songs that have lapsed and fallen from my memory.

O sweet Love, that mantlest thyself in a smile, how glowing didst thou appear in those pipes that were filled only with the breath of holy thoughts!

When the bright and precious jewels wherewith I saw the sixth luminary engemmed had imposed silence on these angelic chimes,

I seemed to hear the murmuring of a river which falls down clear from rock to rock, showing the abundance of its high source. And as the sound takes its form at the neck of the lute, and the wind at the vent of the pipe it fills, so, without keeping me waiting longer, that murmuring of the Eagle rose up through the neck, as if it were hollow. There it became voice, and thence it issued through the beak in the form of words such as the heart whereon I wrote them was awaiting.

"That part in me which in mortal eagles sees and endures the sun you must now gaze on intently," it began to me, "because, of the fires whereof I make my shape, those with which the eye in my head is sparkling are of all their ranks the chiefs. He that shines midmost, as the pupil, was the singer of the Holy Ghost, who bore the ark about from town to town. Now he knows the merit of his song, so far as it was the effect of his own counsel, by the reward which is proportioned to it. Of the five which make an arch for my brow, he who is nearest to my beak consoled the poor widow for her son. Now he knows, by experience of this sweet life and of the opposite, how dear it costs not to follow Christ.

And he who follows on the circumference whereof I speak, upon the upward arc, by true penitence delayed death. Now he knows that the eternal judgment is not changed when worthy prayer there below makes tomorrow's that which was today's. The next who follows, with a good intention which bore bad fruit, made himself Greek, together with the laws and me, in order to give place to the Pastor. Now he knows how the evil derived from his good action does not harm him, even though the world should be destroyed thereby. And him you see in the downward arc was William, for whom that land mourns that weeps on account of the living Charles and Frederick. Now he knows how Heaven is enamored of the righteous king, as by the effulgence of his aspect he yet makes this evident. Who would believe, down in the erring world, that Ripheus the Trojan was the fifth of the holy lights in this circle? Now he knows much of the divine grace that the world cannot see, even though his sight discerns not the bottom."

Like the lark that soars in the air, first singing, then silent, content with the last sweetness that satiates it, so seemed to me the image of the imprint of the Eternal Pleasure, by whose will everything becomes that which it is.

And albeit there I was to my questioning like glass to the color that it clothes, yet would it not endure to bide its time in silence, but by its weight and pressure forced from my lips, "How can these things be?" At which I saw a great festival of flashing lights. And then, its eye kindling yet more, the blessed sign, not to keep me in suspense and amazement, replied, "I see that you believe these things because I tell them, but you see not the *how*, so that, though believed in, they are hidden. You do as one who well apprehends a thing by name, but may not see its quiddity unless another explain it. *Regnum celorum* suffers violence from fervent love and from living hope which vanquishes the Divine will: not as man overcomes man, but vanquishes it because it wills to be vanquished, and vanquished, vanquishes with its own benignity. The first soul of the eyebrow and the fifth make you marvel, because you see the region of the Angels decked with them. They came forth from their bodies not as you think, Gentiles, but Christians, with firm faith, the one in the Feet that were to suffer, the other in the Feet that had suffered. For the one came back to his bones from Hell, where none ever returns to right will; and this was the reward of living hope,

of living hope that gave power to the prayers made to God to raise him up, that it might be possible for his will to be moved. The glorious soul I tell of, having returned to the flesh for a short time, believed in Him that was able to help him; and, believing, was kindled to such a fire of true love that on his second death he was worthy to come to this rejoicing. The other, through grace that wells from a fountain so deep that never did creature thrust eye down to its first wave, set all his love below on righteousness; wherefore, from grace to grace, God opened his eye to our future redemption, so that he believed in it, and thenceforth endured not the stench of paganism, and reproved the perverse peoples for it. Those three ladies whom you saw by the right wheel stood for baptism to him more than a thousand years before baptizing.

"O predestination, how remote is thy root from the vision of those who see not the First Cause entire! And you mortals, keep yourselves restrained in judging; for we, who see God, know not yet all the elect. And to us such defect is sweet, because our good in this good is refined, that what God wills we also will."

Thus, to make my short sight clear, sweet medicine was given to me by that divine image. And as a good lutanist makes the vibration of the string accompany a good singer, by which the song gains more pleasantness, so, I remember that, while it spoke, I saw the two blessed lights, just as the winking of the eyes concords, making their flames quiver to the words.

CANTO XXI

ALREADY MY eyes were fixed again on the face of my lady, and with them my mind, and from every other intent it was withdrawn; and she did not smile, but, "Were I to smile," she began to me, "you would become such as was Semele when she turned to ashes; for my beauty which, along the steps of the eternal palace, is kindled the more, as you have seen, the higher the ascent, were it not tempered, is so resplendent that your mortal powers at its flash would be like the bough shattered by a thunderbolt. We have risen to the seventh splendor which beneath the breast of the burning Lion rays down now mingled with its power. Fix your mind after your eyes, and make of them mirrors to the figure which in this mirror shall be shown to you."

He who should know what was the pasture of my sight in her blessed aspect, when I transferred me to another care, would recognize how much it rejoiced me to be obedient to my heavenly guide, weighing the one with the other side.

Within the crystal which bears the name, circling round the world, of its beloved leader beneath whom every wickedness lay dead, I saw, of the color of gold on which a sunbeam is shining, a ladder rising up so high that my sight might not follow it. I saw, moreover, so many splendors descending along the steps, that I thought every light which appears in heaven had been poured down from it.

And, as by their natural custom, the daws move about together, at the beginning of the day, to warm their cold feathers, then some fly away not to return, some wheel round to whence they had started, while others wheeling make a stay; such movements, it seemed to me, were in that sparkling, which came in a throng, as soon as it smote upon a certain step.

And that one which stopped nearest to us became so bright that in my thought I said, "I clearly perceive the love which you are signaling to me. But she from whom I await the how and the when of speech and of silence pauses, and therefore I, counter to desire, do well not to ask."

Whereupon she, who saw my silence in His sight who sees all, said to me, "Loose your warm desire." And I began, "My own merit does not make me worthy of your answer, but for her sake who gives me leave to ask, O blessed life that are hidden within your own joy, make known to me the cause that has placed you so near me; and tell why in this wheel the sweet symphony of Paradise is silent, which below through the others so devoutly sounds."

"You have the hearing as the sight of mortals," it replied to me, "wherefore here is no song, for that same reason for which Beatrice has not smiled. Down by the steps of the sacred ladder I descended so far only to give you glad welcome with my speech and with the light that mantles me; nor was it greater love that made me swifter; for love as much and more is burning up there, even as the flaming manifests to you; but the high charity which makes us prompt servants of the counsel which governs the world allots here as you perceive."

"I see well," said I, "O holy lamp, how free love suffices in this Court for following the eternal Providence; but this is what seems to me hard to discern, why you alone among your consorts were predestined to this office."

Nor had I come to the last word when the light made a center of its middle, and spun round like a rapid millstone. Then answered the love that was therein, "A divine light is directed on me, penetrating through this wherein I embosom myself, the virtue of which, conjoined with my vision, lifts me above myself so far that I see the Supreme Essence from which it is drawn. From this comes the joy with which I am aflame, for to my sight, in the measure of its clearness, I match the clearness of my flame. But that soul in heaven which is most enlightened, that Seraph who has his eye most fixed on God, could not satisfy your question; for that which you ask lies so deep within the abyss of the eternal statute that it is cut off from every created vision. And when you return to the mortal world, carry this back, so that it may no longer presume to move its feet toward so great a goal. The mind, which shines here, on earth is smoky, and therefore think how it can do below that which it cannot do, though heaven raise it to itself."

His words so restrained me that I left the question and drew me back to ask it humbly who it was. "Between the two shores of Italy, and not very far from your native land, rise crags so high that the thunders sound far lower down;

and they make a hump whose name is Catria, beneath which a hermitage is consecrated, which once was wholly given to worship." Thus it began again to me with its third speech; then continued, "There in the service of God I became so steadfast that with food seasoned only with olive-juice I passed easily through heats and frosts, content in contemplative thoughts. That cloister used to yield abundant harvest to these heavens, and now it is become so barren that soon it needs must be revealed. In that place was I Peter Damian, and in the House of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore I was Peter the Sinner. Little of mortal life was left to me when I was sought for and dragged to that hat which ever passes down from bad to worse. Cephas came, and the great vessel of the Holy Spirit came, lean and barefoot, taking their food at whatsoever inn. Now the modern pastors require one to prop them up on this side and one on that, and one to lead them, so heavy are they, and one to hold up their trains behind. They cover their palfreys with their mantles, so that two beasts go under one hide. O patience, that do endure so much!"

At these words I saw more flamelets from step to step descending, and whirling; and every whirl made them more beautiful.

Round about this one they came, and stopped, and uttered a cry of such deep sound that nothing here could be likened to it; nor did I understand it, so did the thunder overcome me.

CANTO XXII

OVERWHELMED WITH amazement, I turned to my guide, like a little child who always runs back to where it has most confidence; and she, like a mother who quickly comforts her pale and gasping son with her voice which is wont to reassure him, said to me, "Do you not know that you are in heaven, do you not know that heaven is all holy, and that whatever is done here comes of righteous zeal? How the song, and I by smiling, would have transmuted you, you can now conceive, since this cry has so much moved you; wherein, had you understood their prayers, already would be known to you the vengeance which you shall see before you die. The sword of here on high cuts not in haste nor tardily, save to his deeming who in longing or in fear awaits it.

But turn now to the others, for you shall see many illustrious spirits, if you direct your sight as I say."

As was her pleasure, I turned my eyes, and I saw a hundred little spheres which together were making themselves beautiful with their mutual rays. I was standing as one who within himself represses the prick of his desire, who does not make bold to ask, he so fears to exceed. And the greatest and most shining of those pearls came forward to satisfy my desire concerning itself. Then within it I heard, "If you could see, as I do, the charity which burns among us, you would have uttered your thoughts; but lest you, by waiting, be delayed in your lofty aim, I will make answer to the thought itself about which you are so circumspect.

"That mountain on whose slope Cassino lies was of old frequented on its summit by the folk deceived and perverse, and I am he who first bore up there His name who brought to earth that truth which so uplifts us; and such grace shone upon me that I drew away the surrounding towns from the impious worship that seduced the world. These other fires were all contemplative men, kindled by that warmth which gives birth to holy flowers and fruits.

Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus, here are my brethren who stayed their feet within the cloisters and kept a steadfast heart."

And I to him, "The affection you show in speaking with me, and the good semblance which I see and note in all your ardors, have expanded my confidence as the sun does the rose when it opens to its fullest bloom. Therefore I pray you—and do you, father, assure me if I am capable of receiving so great a grace, that I may behold you in your uncovered shape."

Whereon he, "Brother, your high desire shall be fulfilled up in the last sphere, where are fulfilled all others and my own. There every desire is perfect, mature, and whole. In that alone is every part there where it always was, for it is not in space, nor has it poles; and our ladder reaches up to it, wherefore it steals itself from your sight. All the way thither the patriarch Jacob saw it stretch its upper part, when it appeared to him so laden with Angels. But no one now lifts his foot from earth to ascend it, and my Rule remains for waste of paper. The walls, which used to be an abbey, have become dens, and the cowls are sacks full of foul meal.

But heavy usury is not exacted so counter to God's pleasure as that fruit which makes the heart of monks so mad; for whatsoever the Church has in keeping is all for the folk that ask it in God's name, not for kindred, or for other filthier thing. The flesh of mortals is so soft that on earth a good beginning does not last from the springing of the oak to the bearing of the acorn. Peter began his fellowship without gold or silver, and I mine with prayer and with fasting, and Francis his with humility; and if you look at the beginning of each, and then look again whither it has strayed, you will see the white changed to dark. Nevertheless, Jordan driven back, and the sea fleeing when God willed, were sights more wondrous than the succor here."

Thus he spoke to me, then drew back to his company, and the company closed together; then like a whirlwind all were gathered upward. My sweet lady, with only a sign, thrust me up after them by that ladder, so did her power overcome my nature; nor ever here below, where we mount and descend by nature's law, was motion so swift as might match my flight. So may I return, reader, to that devout triumph for the sake of which I often bewail my sins and beat my breast,

you would not have drawn out and put your finger into the fire so quickly as I saw the sign which follows the Bull, and was within it.

O glorious stars, O light impregnated with mighty power, from which I derive all my genius, whatsoever it may be, with you was rising and with you was hiding himself he who is father of every mortal life when I first felt the air of Tuscany; and then, when the grace was bestowed on me to enter the lofty wheel that bears you round, your region was assigned to me! To you my soul now devoutly sighs, that it may acquire virtue for the hard pass which draws it to itself.

"You are so near to the final blessedness," Beatrice began, "that you must have your eyes clear and keen. And therefore, before you enter farther into it, look back downward and behold how great a world I have already set beneath your feet, in order that your heart may present itself, joyous to its utmost, to the triumphant throng which comes glad through this round ether."

With my sight I returned through all and each of the seven spheres, and saw this globe such that I smiled at its paltry semblance; and that counsel I approve as best which holds it for least, and he whose thought is turned elsewhere may be called truly upright.

I saw the daughter of Latona glowing without that shade for which I once believed her rare and dense. The aspect of your son, Hyperion, I there endured, and saw how Maia and Dione move around and near him. Then appeared to me the tempering of Jove between his father and his son, and then was clear to me the varying they make in their position. And all the seven were displayed to me, how great they are and swift, and how distant each from other in location. The little threshing-floor which makes us so fierce was all revealed to me from hills to river-mouths, as I circled with the eternal Twins. Then to the beauteous eyes I turned my eyes again.

CANTO XXIII

As THE bird, among the beloved leaves, having sat on the nest of her sweet brood through the night which hides things from us, who, in order to look upon their longed-for aspect and to find the food wherewith to feed them, wherein her heavy toils are pleasing to her, foreruns the time, upon the open bough, and with glowing love awaits the sun, fixedly gazing for the dawn to break; so was my lady standing, erect and eager, turned toward the region beneath which the sun shows less haste. I, therefore, seeing her in suspense and longing, became as he who in desire would fain have something else, and in hope is satisfied. But short was the time between the one and the other *when*, of my waiting, I mean, and of my seeing the heavens become more and more resplendent. And Beatrice said, "Behold the hosts of Christ's triumph and all the fruit garnered from the circling of these spheres!"

It seemed to me her face was all aflame, and her eyes were so full of joy that I must needs pass it by undescribed.

As in the clear skies at the full moon Trivia smiles among the eternal nymphs that deck heaven through all its depths, I saw, above thousands of lamps, a Sun which kindled each one of them as does our own the things we see above; and through its living light the lucent Substance outglowed so bright upon my vision that it endured it not.

O Beatrice, sweet guide and dear! She said to me, "That which overcomes you is power against which naught defends itself. Therein are the wisdom and the power that opened the roads between Heaven and earth, for which of old there was such long desire."

Even as fire breaks from a cloud, because it dilates so that it has not room there, and contrary to its own nature, falls down to earth, so my mind, becoming greater amid those feasts, issued from itself, and of what it became has no remembrance.

"Open your eyes and look on what I am; you have seen things such that you are become able to sustain my smile." I was as one that wakes from a forgotten dream, and who strives in vain to bring it back to mind,

when I heard this proffer, worthy of such gratitude that it can never be effaced from the book which records the past.

Though all those tongues which Polyhymnia and her sisters made most rich with their sweetest milk should sound now to aid me, it would not come to a thousandth part of the truth, in singing the holy smile, and how it lit up the holy aspect; and so, depicting Paradise, the sacred poem must needs make a leap, even as one who finds his way cut off. But whoso thinks of the ponderous theme and of the mortal shoulder which is laden therewith, will not blame it if it tremble beneath the load. It is no voyage for a little bark, this which my daring prow cleaves as it goes, nor for a pilot who would spare himself.

"Why does my face so enamor you that you turn not to the fair garden which blossoms beneath the rays of Christ? Here is the Rose wherein the Divine Word became flesh; here are the lilies by whose odor the good way was taken."

Thus Beatrice; and I who to her counsels was all eager, again gave myself up to the battle of the feeble brows.

As under the sun's ray, which streams pure through a broken cloud, ere now my eyes, sheltered by shade, have seen a meadow of flowers,

so saw I many hosts of splendors glowed on from above by ardent rays, though I saw not whence came the glowings. O benign Power, which doth so imprint them, Thou didst ascend so as to yield place there for the eyes that were powerless before Thee!

The name of the fair flower which I ever invoke, both morning and evening, absorbed all my mind as I gazed on the greatest flame. And when on both of my eyes had been depicted the quality and the greatness of the living star which conquers up there even as down here it conquered, there descended through the heaven a torch which formed a circle in the likeness of a crown that girt her and wheeled about her. Whatever melody sounds sweetest here below and most draws to itself the soul, would seem a cloud which, being rent, thunders, compared with the sound of that lyre wherewith was crowned the beauteous sapphire by which the brightest heaven is ensapphired.

"I am angelic love, who circle the supreme joy that breathes from out the womb which was the hostelry of our Desire; and I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, until thou shalt follow thy Son, and make the supreme sphere more divine by entering it." Thus the circling melody sealed itself, and all the other lights made Mary's name resound.

The royal mantle of all the world's revolving spheres, which most burns and is most quickened in the breath of God and in His workings, had, above us, its inner shore so distant that sight of it, there where I was, was not yet possible to me. Therefore my eyes had not power to follow the crowned flame which mounted upward after her offspring. And as an infant which, when it has taken the milk, stretches its arms toward its mother, its affection glowing forth, each of these splendors stretched upward with its peak, so that the deep love they had for Mary was made plain to me. Then they remained there in my sight, singing *Regina celi* so sweetly that never has the delight departed from me. Oh, how great is the abundance which is heaped up in those rich coffers, who were good sowers here below! Here they live and rejoice in the treasure which was gained with tears in the exile of Babylon, where gold was scorned. Here, under the exalted Son of God and Mary, together with both the ancient and the new council, he triumphs in his victory who holds the keys of such glory.

CANTO XXIV

"O FELLOWSHIP elect to the great supper of the blessed Lamb, who feeds you so that your desire is ever satisfied, since by the grace of God this man foretastes of that which falls from your table before death appoint his time to him, give heed to his immense longing and bedew him somewhat: you drink ever of the fountain whence flows that which he thinks." Thus Beatrice; and those glad souls made themselves spheres upon fixed poles, flaming like comets, as they whirled. And as wheels within the fittings of clocks revolve, so that to one who gives heed the first seems quiet and the last to fly, so did those carols, dancing severally fast and slow, make me judge of their riches.

From the one I noted as the richest I saw issue a fire so joyful that it left there none of greater brightness; and it revolved three times round Beatrice with a song so divine that my phantasy does not repeat it to me; wherefore my pen leaps and I do not write it, for our imagination, not to say our speech, is of too vivid color for such folds.

"O holy sister mine, who do so devoutly pray to us, by your ardent affection you loose me from that fair sphere"; after it had stopped, the blessed fire breathed forth these words to my lady as I have told them.

And she, "O eternal light of the great man with whom our Lord left the keys, which He bore below, of this marvelous joy, test this man on points light and grave, as pleases you, concerning the Faith by which you did walk upon the sea. Whether he loves rightly and rightly hopes and believes is not hidden from you, for you have your vision where everything is seen depicted. But since this kingdom has made its citizens by the true faith, it rightly falls to him to speak of it, that he may glorify it."

Even as the bachelor arms himself—and does not speak until the master propounds the question—in order to adduce the proof, not to decide it,

so, while she was speaking, I was arming myself with every reason, to be ready for such a questioner and for such a profession.

"Speak, good Christian, and declare yourself: Faith, what is it?" Whereon I raised my brow to that light whence this was breathed forth, then I turned to Beatrice, who promptly signaled to me that I should pour the water forth from my inward fountain.

"May the grace that grants me to confess to the Chief Centurion," I began, "cause my conceptions to be well expressed." And I went on, "As the veracious pen of your dear brother wrote of it, who with you, father, put Rome on the good path, Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen; and this I take to be its quiddity."

Then I heard, "Rightly do you deem, if you understand well why he placed it among the substances and then among the evidences."

And I thereon, "The deep things which grant to me here the sight of themselves are so hidden to eyes below that there their existence is in belief alone, upon which the lofty hope is founded; and therefore it takes the designation of substance. And from this belief needs must we reason, without seeing more: therefore it receives the designation of evidence."

Then I heard, "If all that is acquired below for doctrine were thus understood, the wit of sophist would have no place there." These words were breathed forth from that enkindled love; and it continued, "Now the alloy and the weight of this coin have been well enough examined; but tell me if you have it in your purse?" And I, "Yes, I have it so shining and so round that in its stamp nothing is doubtful to me."

Then issued from the deep light that was shining there, "This precious jewel whereon every virtue is founded, whence did it come to you?"

And I, "The plenteous rain of the Holy Spirit which is poured over the old and over the new parchments is a syllogism that has proved it to me so acutely that, in comparison with this, every demonstration seems obtuse to me."

Then I heard, "That old and that new proposition which are so conclusive to you, why do you hold them for divine discourse?"

And I, "The proof which discloses the truth to me are the works that followed, for which nature never heats iron nor beats anvil."

"Tell me," came the reply, "who assures you that these works ever were? The very thing itself which requires to be proved, and naught else, affirms them to you."

"If the world turned to Christianity without miracles," I said, "that one is such that the rest are not the hundredth part;

for you entered the field poor and hungry, to sow the good plant which was once a vine and is now become a thorn."

This ended, the high and holy court resounded a *"Te Deum laudamus"* through the spheres, in the melody which up there is sung.

And that Baron who, thus from branch to branch examining, had now drawn me on so that we were approaching the last leaves, began again, "The Grace that holds amorous discourse with your mind, till now has opened your lips aright, so that I approve what has come from them; but now you must declare what you believe and whence it was offered to your belief."

"O holy father, spirit who see that which you did so believe that you, toward the sepulchre, did outdo younger feet," I began, "you would have me declare here the form of my ready belief, and also you have asked the cause of it. And I reply: I believe in one God, sole and eternal, who, unmoved, moves all the heavens with love and with desire; and for this belief I have not only proofs physical and metaphysical, but it is given to me also in the truth that rains down hence through Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, through the Gospel, and through you who wrote when the fiery Spirit had made you holy.

And I believe in three Eternal Persons, and these I believe to be one essence, so one and so threefold as to comport at once with *are* and *is*. With the profound divine state whereof I now speak, the evangelic doctrine many times sets the seal upon my mind. This is the beginning, this is the spark which then dilates to a living flame and like a star in heaven shines within me."

Even as the master who listens to that which pleases him, then embraces his servant, rejoicing in his news, as soon as he is silent; so, singing benedictions on me, the apostolic light at whose bidding I had spoken encircled me three times when I was silent, I so pleased him by my speech.

CANTO XXV

If ever it come to pass that the sacred poem to which heaven and earth have so set hand that it has made me lean for many years should overcome the cruelty which bars me from the fair sheepfold where I slept as a lamb, an enemy to the wolves which war on it, with changed voice now and with changed fleece a poet will I return, and at the font of my baptism will I take the crown; because there I entered into the Faith that makes souls known to God; and afterward Peter, for its sake, thus encircled my brow.

Then a light moved towards us from that circle whence had issued the first-fruit which Christ left of His vicars; and my lady, full of gladness, said to me, "Look! look! Behold the Baron for whose sake, down below, folk visit Galicia."

As when the dove alights beside its mate, and the one lavishes its affection on the other, circling it and cooing,

so did I see the one great and glorious prince received by the other, praising the food which feeds them thereabove. But when the joyful greeting was completed, each stopped silent *coram me*, so aflame that it overcame my sight. Then Beatrice, smiling, said, "Illustrious life, by whom the bounty of our Court was chronicled, make hope resound in this height; you can, who did figure it all those times when Jesus showed most favor to the three."

"Lift up your head and see that you reassure yourself, for that which comes up here from the mortal world must be ripened in our beams." This assurance came to me from the second fire; whereon I lifted up my eyes unto the hills which had bent them down before with excess of weight.

"Since, of His grace, our Emperor wills that you, before your death, come face to face with His Counts in His most secret hall, so that, having seen the truth of this Court, you may strengthen in yourself and others the Hope which there below rightly enamors, say what it is, and how your mind blossoms with it, and say whence it came to you." Thus the second light continued further.

And that compassionate one, who had guided the feathers of my wings to such lofty flight, anticipated my reply thus,

"The Church Militant has not any child possessed of more hope, as is written in the Sun which irradiates all our host; therefore is it granted him to come from Egypt to Jerusalem, that he may see, before his term of warfare is completed. The other two points which are asked, not for sake of knowing, but that he may report how greatly this virtue is pleasing to you, I leave to him, for they will not be difficult to him, nor of vainglory; and let him answer thereto, and may the grace of God concede this to him."

As the pupil who answers the teacher, ready and eager in that wherein he is expert, so that his worth may be disclosed, "Hope," I said, "is a sure expectation of future glory, which divine grace produces, and preceding merit. From many stars this light comes to me, but he first instilled it into my heart who was the supreme singer of the Supreme Leader. 'Let them hope in Thee who know Thy name,' he says in his divine song, and who knows it not, if he have my faith. You afterwards in your Epistle did instill it into me, together with his instilling, so that I am full, and pour again your shower upon others."

While I was speaking, within the living bosom of that fire trembled a flash, sudden and frequent, like lightning;

then it breathed forth, "The love whereof I am still aflame toward that virtue which followed me even to the palm and the departure from the field wills that I breathe again to you, who do delight in it; and it is my pleasure that you tell that which Hope promises to you."

And I, "The new and the old Scriptures set up the token of the souls that God has made His friends, and this points it out to me. Isaiah says that each one shall be clothed in his own land with a double garment, and his own land is this sweet life; and your brother, where he treats of the white robes, makes manifest this revelation to us far more expressly."

At first, close on the end of these words, *"Sperent in te"* was heard above us, to which all the carols made answer; then one light among them shone out so bright that if the Crab had one such crystal, winter would have a month of one unbroken day. And as a glad maiden rises and goes and enters into the dance, only to do honor to the bride, not for any failing, so did I see the brightened splendor approach the two who were wheeling to such a song as befitted their burning love. It joined there in the singing and the wheeling, and my lady kept her gaze upon them, even as a bride silent and motionless.

"This is he who lay upon the breast of our Pelican, and this is he who was chosen from upon the Cross for the great office." Thus my lady; but no more after than before her words did she move her gaze from its fixed attention.

As is he who gazes and strains to see the sun a little eclipsed, and who through seeing becomes sightless, so did I become in respect to that last fire, till it was said, "Why do you dazzle yourself in order to see that which has here no place? On earth my body is earth, and there it shall be with the rest, until our number equals the eternal purpose. With the two robes in the blessed cloister are those two lights only which ascended; and this you shall carry back into your world."

At these words the flaming circle fell silent, together with the sweet mingling made within the sound of the trinal breath, even as, to avoid fatigue or danger, oars till then struck through the water, stop all at once at the sound of a whistle.

Ah! how greatly was I stirred in my mind when I turned to see Beatrice, at not being able to see, although I was near her, and in the world of bliss.

CANTO XXVI

WHILE I WAS apprehensive because of my quenched sight, there issued forth from the effulgent flame that quenched it a breath that made me attentive, and it said, "Until you have again the sense of sight which you have consumed in me, it is well that you compensate it by discourse. Begin then, and say on what aim your soul is set; and be assured that your sight in you is confounded, not destroyed; for the lady who guides you through this divine region has in her look the power which the hand of Ananias had."

And I said, "At her good pleasure, soon or late, let succor come to the eyes which were the doors when she did enter with the fire wherewith I ever burn. The good which satisfies this Court is Alpha and Omega of all the scripture which Love reads to me, either low or loud."

The same voice that had delivered me from my fear at the sudden dazzlement gave me concern to speak again; and it said, "Assuredly you must sift with a finer sieve: you must tell who directed your bow to such a target."

And I, "By philosophic arguments, and by authority that descends from here, such love must needs imprint itself on me; for the good, inasmuch as it is good, kindles love in proportion as it is understood, and so much the more the more of good it contains in itself. Therefore, to that Essence wherein is such supremacy that whatsoever good be found outside of It is naught else save a beam of Its own radiance, more than to any other must the mind be moved, in love, of whoever discerns the truth on which this proof is founded. Such a truth he makes plain to my intelligence who demonstrates to me the first love of all the eternal substances. The voice of the veracious Author makes it plain where, speaking of Himself, He says to Moses, 'I will make you see all goodness.' You also set it forth to me in the beginning of your sublime proclamation, which more than any other heralding, declares below the mystery of this place on high."

And I heard, "On the ground of human reason and of the authorities concordant with it, the highest of all your loves looks to God;

but tell me also if you feel other cords draw you toward Him, so that you declare with how many teeth this love grips you."

The holy intention of the Eagle of Christ was not hidden, indeed it was plain to me whither he would direct my profession. Therefore I began again, "All those things whose bite can make the heart turn to God have wrought together in my love; for the being of the world and my own being, the death that He sustained that I might live, and that which every believer hopes, as do I, with the living assurance of which I spoke, have drawn me from the sea of perverse love and placed me on the shore of right love. The leaves wherewith all the garden of the Eternal Gardener is enleaved I love in measure of the good borne unto them from Him."

As soon as I was silent a most sweet song resounded through the heaven, and my lady sang with the rest, "Holy, Holy, Holy!" And as sleep is broken by a piercing light when the visual spirit runs to meet the splendor that goes from tunic to tunic, and he who awakens shrinks from what he sees, so ignorant is his sudden wakening, until his judgment comes to his aid; thus Beatrice chased away every mote from my eyes with the radiance of her own, which shone more than a thousand miles;

so that I then saw better than before; and as one amazed I asked concerning a fourth light which I saw with us. And my lady, "Within those rays the first soul which the First Power ever created gazes with love upon its Maker."

As the bough which bends its top at passing of the wind, and then uplifts itself by its own virtue which raises it, so did I, in amazement, while she was speaking, and then a desire to speak, wherewith I was burning, gave me assurance again, and I began, "O fruit that were alone produced mature, O ancient father of whom every bride is daughter and daughter-in-law, devoutly as I can, I implore you that you speak to me: you see my wish, and that I may hear you sooner I do not tell it."

Sometimes an animal that is covered so stirs that its impulse must needs be apparent, since what envelops it follows its movements: in like manner that first soul showed me, through its covering, how joyously it came to do me pleasure. Then it breathed forth, "Without its being told to me by you, I discern your wish better than you whatever is most certain to you, for I see it in the truthful Mirror which makes of Itself a reflection of all else, while of It nothing makes itself the reflection.

You wish to know how long it is since God placed me in the lofty garden wherein this lady prepared you for so long a stair; and how long it was a delight to my eyes; and the true cause of the great wrath; and the idiom which I used and shaped. Now know, my son, that the tasting of the tree was not in itself the cause of so long an exile, but solely the overpassing of the bound. In the place whence your lady dispatched Virgil, I longed for this assembly during four thousand three hundred and two revolutions of the sun; and while I was on earth I saw him return to all the lights of his path nine hundred and thirty times. The tongue which I spoke was all extinct before the people of Nimrod attempted their unaccomplishable work; for never was any product of reason durable forever, because of human liking, which alters, following the heavens. That man should speak is nature's doing, but whether thus or thus, nature then leaves you to follow your own pleasure. Before I descended to the anguish of Hell the Supreme Good from whom comes the joy that swathes me was named *I* on earth; and later He was called *El*: and that must needs be, for the usage of mortals is as a leaf on a branch, which goes away and another comes.

On the mountain which rises highest from the sea I lived pure, then guilty, from the first hour to that which follows, when the sun changes quadrant, next upon the sixth.

CANTO XXVII

"GLORY BE to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit!" all Paradise began, so that the sweet song held me rapt. What I saw seemed to me a smile of the universe, so that my rapture entered both by hearing and by sight. O joy! O ineffable gladness! O life entire of love and of peace! O wealth secure without longing!

Before my eyes the four torches stood enkindled, and that which had come first began to make itself more vivid, and in its aspect became as would Jupiter if he and Mars were birds and should exchange plumage. The Providence which there assigns turn and office had imposed silence on the blessed choir on every side,

when I heard, "If I change color, marvel not, for, as I speak, you shall see all these change color. He who on earth usurps my place, my place, my place, which in the sight of the Son of God is vacant, has made my burial-ground a sewer of blood and of stench, so that the Perverse One who fell from here above takes comfort there below."

With that color which, by reason of the opposite sun, paints the cloud at evening and at morning, I then saw the whole heaven overspread. And as a chaste lady who is sure of herself, and at another's fault, only hearing of it, becomes timid, so did Beatrice change her semblance; and such, I believe, was the eclipse in heaven when the Supreme Power suffered.

Then his words continued, in a voice so altered from itself that his looks were not more changed, "The spouse of Christ was not nurtured on my blood and that of Linus and of Cletus, to be employed for gain of gold; but for gain of this happy life Sixtus and Pius and Calixtus and Urban shed their blood after much weeping. It was not our purpose that one part of the Christian people should sit on the right of our successors, and one part on the left;

nor that the keys which were committed to me should become the ensign on a banner for warfare on the baptized; nor that I should be made a figure on a seal to sold and lying privileges, whereat I often blush and flash. Rapacious wolves, in shepherd's garb, are seen from here above in all the pastures: O defense of God, wherefore dost thou yet lie still? Cahorsines and Gascons make ready to drink our blood. O good beginning, to what vile ending must you fall! But the high Providence, which with Scipio defended for Rome the glory of the world, will succor speedily, as I conceive. And you, my son, who, because of your mortal weight will again return below, open your mouth and do not hide what I hide not."

Even as our air, when the horn of the heavenly Goat is touched by the sun, flakes down frozen vapors, so I saw the ether thus adorned, flaking upwards triumphal vapors which had made sojourn with us there. My sight was following their semblances, and followed, till the intermediate space became so great that it took from it the power of passing farther onward. Whereon my lady, who saw me freed from gazing upwards, said to me, "Cast your sight down and see how far you have revolved."

From the time when I had looked before, I saw that I had moved through the whole arc which the first climate makes from its middle to its end; so that, on the one hand, beyond Cadiz, I saw the mad track of Ulysses, and on the other nearly to the shore where Europa made herself a sweet burden; and more of the space of this little threshing-floor would have been disclosed to me, but the sun was proceeding beneath my feet and was a sign and more away.

My enamored mind, which ever pays court to my lady, was more than ever burning to bring back my eyes to her; and if nature or art ever made baits to take the eye so as to possess the mind, in human flesh or in its portraiture, all these together would seem as nothing beside the divine delight that glowed upon me when I turned to her smiling face. And the power which her look granted me drew me forth from the fair nest of Leda and thrust me into the swiftest of the heavens.

Its parts, most living and exalted, are so uniform that I cannot tell which of them Beatrice chose as a place for me. But she, who saw my longing, began, smiling so glad that God seemed to rejoice in her countenance, "The nature of the universe which holds the center quiet and moves all the rest around it, begins here as from its starting-point.

And this heaven has no other *Where* than the divine mind, wherein is kindled the love that revolves it, and the virtue which it rains down. Light and love enclose it in a circle, as it does the others, and this engirdment He alone who girds it understands. Its motion is not determined by another's, but the others are measured by this, just as ten by its half and its fifth. And how time should have its roots in such a flower-pot, and in the others its leaves, may now be manifest to you.

"O greed, who do so plunge mortals in your depths that none has power to lift his eyes from your waves! The will blossoms well in men, but the continual rain turns the sound plums into blighted fruit. Faith and innocence are found only in little children; then each flies away before the cheeks are covered. One, so long as he lisps, keeps the fasts, who afterward, when his tongue is free, devours any food through any month; and one, while he lisps, loves his mother and listens to her, who afterward, when his speech is full, longs to see her buried. Thus the white skin turns black at the first sight of the fair daughter of him that brings morning and leaves evening.

That you marvel not at this, consider that on earth there is no one to govern, wherefore the human family goes thus astray. But before January be all unwintered, because of the hundredth part that is neglected below, these lofty circles shall so shine forth that the storm which has been so long awaited shall turn round the sterns to where the prows are, so that the fleet shall run straight; and good fruit shall follow on the flower."

CANTO XXVIII

AFTER SHE who imparadises my mind had declared the truth counter to the present life of wretched mortals, as one who sees in a mirror the flame of a torch which is lighted behind him before he has it in sight or in thought, and turns round to see if the glass tells him the truth, and sees that it accords with it as a song with its measure, so my memory recalls that I did, gazing into the beautiful eyes wherewith Love made the cord to capture me. And when I turned and my own were met by what appears in that revolving sphere whenever one gazes intently on its circling, I saw a point which radiated a light so keen that the eye on which it blazes needs must close because of its great keenness; and whatever star seems smallest from here would seem a moon if placed beside it like a star with neighboring star.

Perhaps as near as a halo seems to girdle the light which paints it, when the vapor that bears it is most dense, at such distance around the point a circle of fire was whirling so rapidly that it would have surpassed that motion which most swiftly girds the universe; and this was girt around by another, and that by a third, and the third by a fourth, by a fifth the fourth, then by a sixth the fifth. Thereon the seventh followed, now spread so wide that the messenger of Juno entire would be too narrow to contain it. So the eighth and the ninth; and each was moving more slowly according as it was in number more distant from the unit. And that one had the clearest flame from which the pure spark was least distant, because, I believe, it partakes more of its truth.

My lady, who saw me eager and in great suspense, said, "On that point the heavens and all nature are dependent. Look on that circle which is most conjoined to it, and know that its motion is so swift because of the burning love whereby it is spurred."

And I to her, "If the universe were disposed in the order which I see in those wheels, that which is set before me would have satisfied me. But in the world of sense the revolutions may be seen so much the more divine as they are more remote from the center.

Wherefore if my desire is to attain to its end in this wondrous and angelic temple which has only love and light for its confine, needs must I further hear why the model and the copy go not in one fashion, for by myself I contemplate this in vain."

"If your fingers are insufficient for such a knot, it is no wonder, so hard has it become by not being tried." So said my lady, then she continued, "Take that which I shall tell you, if you would be satisfied, and sharpen your wits about it. The material spheres are wide or narrow according to the more or less of virtue which is diffused through all their parts. Greater goodness must needs work greater weal; and the greater body, if it has its parts equally complete, contains the greater weal. Hence this sphere, which sweeps along with it all the rest of the universe, corresponds to the circle which loves most and knows most. Wherefore, if you draw your measure round the virtue, not the semblance, of the substances which appear to you in circles, you will see a wondrous correspondence of greater to more and of smaller to less, in each heaven with respect to its Intelligence."

As the hemisphere of the air remains splendid and serene when Boreas blows from his milder cheek,

whereby the obscuring mist is cleared and dissolved, so that the heaven smiles to us with the beauties of its every region, so I became after my lady had provided me with her clear answer, and like a star in heaven the truth was seen.

And when she had paused in her speech, not otherwise does molten iron throw out sparks than the circles sparkled. Each spark kept to its fiery ring, and they were so many that their number stretches to more thousands than the doubling of the chessboard. I heard Hosannah sung from choir to choir to the fixed point that holds them, and will forever hold them at the *Ubi* in which they have ever been. And she, who saw the questioning thoughts within my mind, said, "The first circles have shown to you the Seraphim and the Cherubim. Thus swiftly they follow their bonds, in order to liken themselves to the point as most they can, and they can in proportion as they are exalted in vision. Those other loves who go round them are called Thrones of the divine aspect, because they terminated the first triad. And you should know that all have delight in the measure of the depth to which their sight penetrates the Truth in which every intellect finds rest; from which it may be seen that the state of blessedness is founded on the act of vision, not on that which loves, which follows after;

and the merit, to which grace and good will give birth, is the measure of their vision; thus, from grade to grade the progression goes.

"The next triad that thus flowers in this eternal spring which nightly Aries does not despoil perpetually sings Hosannah with three melodies which sound in the three orders of bliss that form the triad. In this hierarchy are the next divinities, first Dominions, then Virtues; and the third are Powers. Then in the two penultimate dances, the Principalities and Archangels circle; the last is wholly of Angelic sports. These orders all gaze upward and prevail downward, so that toward God all are drawn, and all do draw. And Dionysius with such great desire set himself to contemplate these orders that he named and distinguished them, as I: but Gregory afterward differed from him, wherefore, as soon as he opened his eyes in this heaven, he smiled at himself. And if a mortal declared on earth so much of secret truth, I would not have you wonder, for he who saw it here on high disclosed it to him, with much else of the truth about these circles."

CANTO XXIX

WHEN THE two children of Latona, covered by the Ram and by the Scales, make the horizon their belt at one same moment, as long as from the instant when the zenith holds them balanced till the one and the other, changing hemispheres, are unbalanced from that belt, for so long, her face illumined with a smile, was Beatrice silent, looking fixedly at the point which had overcome me. Then she began, "I tell, not ask, what you wish to hear, for I have seen it there where every *ubi* and every *quando* is centered. Not for gain of good unto Himself, which cannot be, but that His splendor might, in resplendence, say, *'Subsisto'*—in His eternity beyond time, beyond every other bound, as it pleased Him, the Eternal Love opened into new loves.

Nor before, as if inert, did He lie, for neither before nor after did the moving of God upon these waters proceed. Form and matter, conjoined and simple, came into being which had no defect, as three arrows from a three-stringed bow; and as in glass, in amber, or in crystal, a ray shines so that there is no interval between its coming and its pervading all, so did the triform effect ray forth from its Lord into its being, all at once, without distinction of beginning. Therewith order was created and ordained for the substances; and those in whom pure act was produced were the summit of the universe. Pure potentiality held the lowest place; in the middle such a bond tied up potentiality with act that it is never unbound. Jerome wrote for you of the angels as being created a long stretch of ages before aught else of the universe was made; but the truth I tell is written on many a page of the scribes of the Holy Spirit, and you shall be aware of it if you look well; and also reason sees it somewhat, which would not admit that the movers could be so long without their perfection. Now you know where and when these Loves were created, and how; so that three flames of your desire are already quenched.

Then, sooner than one might count to twenty, a part of the Angels disturbed the substrate of your elements. The rest remained and with such great delight began this art which you behold that they never cease from circling. The origin of the fall was the accursed pride of him whom you have seen constrained by all the weights of the universe. Those whom you see here were modest to recognize their being as from the Goodness which had made them apt for intelligence so great: wherefore their vision was exalted with illuminating grace and with their merit, so that they have their will full and established. And I would not have you doubt, but be assured that to receive grace is meritorious, in proportion as the affection is open to it.

"By now, if you have taken in my words, you may contemplate much in regard to this consistory without more help. But since it is taught in your schools on earth that the angelic nature is such that it understands and remembers and wills, I will speak further, in order that you may see in purity the truth that down there is confounded by the equivocation in such like teaching. These substances, since first they were gladdened by the face of God, have never turned their eyes from It, wherefrom nothing is concealed;

so that their sight is never intercepted by a new object, and therefore they have no need to remember by reason of interrupted concept. Thus down there men dream while awake, believing or not believing that they speak truth—but in the one case is the greater blame and shame. You mortals do not proceed along one same path in philosophizing, so much does the love of show and the thought of it carry you away; and even this is borne with less anger up here than when the Divine Scripture is set aside or when it is perverted. They think not there how much blood it costs to sow it in the world, nor how much he pleases who humbly keeps close to it. Each one strives for display and makes his own inventions, and these are treated of by the preachers, and the Gospel is silent. One says that at Christ's passion the moon turned back and interposed itself, so that the light of the sun did not reach below—and he lies, for the light itself hid itself, so that this eclipse took place for the Spaniards and the Indians, as well as for the Jews. Florence has not so many Lapos and Bindos as fables such as these that are shouted the year long from the pulpits on every side; so that the poor sheep, who know naught, return from the pasture fed with wind—and not seeing the harm does not excuse them.

Christ did not say to his first company, 'Go and preach idle stories to the world,' but he gave to them the true foundation; and that alone sounded on their lips, so that to fight for kindling of the faith they made shield and lance of the Gospel. Now men go forth to preach with jests and with buffooneries, and so there be only a good laugh, the cowl puffs up and nothing more is asked. But such a bird nests in the hood's tail that if the people saw it, they would see what pardons they are trusting in; from which such folly has grown on earth that without proof of any testimony they would flock to every promise. On this the pig of St. Anthony fattens, and others also, who are far more pigs, paying with money that has no stamp of coinage.

"But since we have digressed enough, turn back your eyes now to the true path, so that the way be shortened with the time. This nature extends so exceedingly in number that never was there speech or mortal concept that might advance so far; and if you look at that which is revealed by Daniel, you will see that in his thousands no definite number is to be found. The Primal Light that irradiates them all is received by them in as many ways as are the splendors to which It joins Itself.

Wherefore, since the affection follows upon the act of conceiving, the sweetness of love glows variously in them, more and less. Behold now the height and breadth of the Eternal Goodness, since it has made itself so many mirrors wherein it is reflected, remaining in itself One as before."

CANTO XXX

THE SIXTH hour is glowing perhaps six thousand miles away, and this world already slopes its shadow almost to a level bed, when the midst of heaven deep above us begins to grow such that a star here and there is lost to sight at this depth; and as the brightest handmaid of the sun advances, the heaven then shuts off its lights one by one, till the fairest is gone; not otherwise the triumph that plays forever round the Point which overcame me, seeming enclosed by that which it encloses, was gradually extinguished to my sight, wherefore seeing nothing and love constrained me to return with my eyes to Beatrice. If what has been said of her so far as here were all included in a single praise, it would be too slight to serve this present turn.

The beauty I beheld transcends measure not only beyond our reach, but I truly believe that He alone who made it can enjoy it all. At this pass I concede myself defeated more than ever comic or tragic poet was defeated by a point in his theme; for, as the sun does to the sight which trembles most, even so remembrance of the sweet smile shears my memory of its very self. From the first day when in this life I saw her face, until this sight, the continuing of my song has not been cut off, but now my pursuit must desist from following her beauty further in my verses, as at his utmost reach must every artist.

Such as I leave her to a greater heralding than that of my trumpet, which draws its arduous subject to a close, with the act and voice of a leader whose task is accomplished she began again, "We have issued forth from the greatest body to the heaven which is pure light: light intellectual full of love, love of true good full of joy, joy that transcends every sweetness. Here you shall see the one and the other soldiery of Paradise, and the one in those aspects which you shall see at the last judgment."

As a sudden flash of lightning which scatters the visual spirits so that it robs the eye of the sight of the clearest objects,

so round about me there shone a vivid light and left me so swathed in the veil of its effulgence that nothing was visible to me.

"Ever does the love which quiets this heaven receive into itself with such like salutation, in order to prepare the candle for its flame." No sooner had these brief words come within me than I comprehended that I was surmounting beyond my own power, and such new vision was kindled in me that there is no light so bright that my eyes could not have withstood it. And I saw a light in form of a river glowing tawny between two banks painted with marvelous spring. From out this river issued living sparks and dropped on every side into the blossoms, like rubies set in gold. Then, as if inebriated by the odors, they plunged again into the wondrous flood, and as one was entering another was issuing forth.

"The high desire which now inflames and urges you to have knowledge concerning that which you see pleases me the more the more it swells; but first you must needs drink of this water before so great a thirst in you be slaked." So spoke the sun of my eyes to me, then added, "The stream and the topazes which enter and issue, and the smiling of the grasses, are the shadowy prefaces of their truth;

not that these things are defective in themselves, but on your side is the defect, in that you do not yet have vision so exalted."

No infant, on waking far after its hour, so suddenly rushes with face toward the milk, as then did I, to make yet better mirrors of my eyes, stooping to the wave which flows there that we may be bettered in it. And even as the eaves of my eyelids drank of it, so it seemed to me out of its length to have become round. Then, as folk who have been under masks seem other than before, if they do off the semblances not their own wherein they were hid, so into greater festival the flowers and the sparks did change before me that I saw both the courts of Heaven made manifest. O splendor of God whereby I saw the high triumph of the true kingdom, give to me power to tell how I beheld it!

A Light is thereabove which makes the Creator visible to every creature that has his peace only in beholding Him. It spreads so wide a circle that the circumference would be too large a girdle for the sun. Its whole expanse is made by a ray reflected from the summit of the Primum Mobile, which therefrom takes its life and potency;

and as a hillside mirrors itself in water at its base, as if to look upon its own adornment when it is rich in grasses and in flowers, so above the light round and round about in more than a thousand tiers I saw all that of us have won return up there. And if the lowest rank encloses within itself so great a light, how vast is the spread of this rose in its outermost leaves! My sight lost not itself in the breadth and in the height, but took in all the extent and quality of that joy. There, near and far neither add not take away, for where God governs without intermediary, the law of nature in no way prevails.

Into the yellow of the eternal Rose, which rises in ranks and expands and breathes forth odor of praise unto the Sun which makes perpetual spring, Beatrice drew me as one who is silent and wishes to speak, and she said, "Behold how great the assembly of the white robes! See our city, how wide is its circuit! See our seats so filled that few souls are now wanted there!

"And in that great chair whereon you fix your eyes because of the crown that already is set above it, before you sup at these nuptials shall sit the soul, which on earth will be imperial, of the lofty Henry, who will come to set Italy straight before she is ready.

The blind cupidity which bewitches you has made you like the little child who dies of hunger and drives away his nurse. And such a one will then be prefect in the divine forum who openly and secretly will not go with him along one same road. But not for long shall God then suffer him in the holy office; for he shall be thrust down where Simon Magus is for his deserts, and shall make him of Alagna go deeper still."

CANTO XXXI

In form then of a pure white rose the saintly host was shown to me, which with His own blood Christ made His bride. But the other host—who, as it flies, sees and sings His glory who enamors it and the goodness which made it so great—like a swarm of bees which one moment enflower themselves, and the next return to where their work acquires savor—was descending into the great flower which is adorned with so many petals, and thence reascending to where its love abides forever. They had their faces all of living flame, and their wings of gold, and the rest so white that no snow reaches such a limit. When they descended into the flower, from rank to rank they proffered of the peace and the ardor which they had acquired as they fanned their sides.

Nor did the interposing of so great a flying plenitude, between what was above and the flower, impede the vision or the splendor; for the divine light so penetrates through the universe, in measure of its worthiness, that naught can be an obstacle to it. This secure and joyful kingdom, thronged with ancient and with modern folk, had look and love all directed on one mark.

O threefold Light, which, in a single star sparkling on their sight, dost so satisfy them, look down upon our tempest here below!

If the Barbarians, coming from such region as is covered every day by Helice, wheeling with her son whom she delights in, when they beheld Rome and her mighty work, when Lateran rose above all mortal things, were wonder-struck, I, who to the divine from the human, to the eternal from time had come, and from Florence to a people just and sane, with what amazement must I have been full! Truly, what with it and with the joy, I was content to hear naught and to stand mute. And as a pilgrim who is refreshed within the temple of his vow as he looks around, and already hopes to tell again how it was, so, taking my way upwards through the living light, I led my eyes along the ranks, now up, now down, and now circling about.

I saw faces all given to love, adorned by the light of Another, and by their own smile, and movements graced with every dignity.

My look had now taken in the general form of Paradise as a whole, and on no part as yet had my sight paused; and I turned with rekindled will to ask my lady about things as to which my mind was in suspense. One thing I purposed, and another answered me: I thought to see Beatrice, and I saw an elder, clad like the folk in glory. His eyes and cheeks were suffused with benign gladness, his mien kindly such as befits a tender father. And, "Where is she?" I said at once; whereon he, "To terminate your desire Beatrice urged me from my place; and if you look up to the circle which is third from the highest tier, you will see her again, in the throne her merits have allotted to her."

Without answering I lifted up my eyes and saw her where she made for herself a crown as she reflected the eternal rays. From the region which thunders most high no mortal eye is so far distant, were it plunged most deep within the sea, as there from Beatrice was my sight. But to me it made no difference, for her image came down to me unblurred by aught between.

"O lady, in whom my hope is strong, and who for my salvation did endure to leave in Hell your footprints, of all those things which I have seen I acknowledge the grace and the virtue to be from your power and your excellence. It is you who have drawn me from bondage into liberty by all those paths, by all those means by which you had the power so to do. Preserve in me your great munificence, so that my soul, which you have made whole, may be loosed from the body, pleasing unto you." So did I pray; and she, so distant as she seemed, smiled and looked on me, then turned again to the eternal fountain.

And the holy elder said, "In order that you may consummate your journey perfectly, whereto prayer and holy love dispatched me, fly with your eyes throughout this garden; for gazing on it will better prepare your sight to mount through the divine ray. And the Queen of Heaven, for whom I am all afire with love, will grant us every grace, since I am her faithful Bernard."

As is he who comes perchance from Croatia to look on our Veronica, and whose old hunger is not sated, but says in thought so long as it is shown, "My Lord Jesus Christ, true God, was then your semblance like to this?"

such was I, gazing on the living charity of him who, in this world, in contemplation tasted of that peace.

"Son of grace, this joyous being," he began, "will not be known to you if you hold your eyes only down here at the base; but look upon the circles, even to the most remote, until you see upon her seat the Queen to whom this realm is subject and devoted."

I lifted up my eyes; and as at morning the eastern parts of the horizon outshine that where the sun declines, so, as if going with my eyes from valley to mountain-top I saw a part on the extreme verge surpass with its light all the rest of the rim. And as the point where we await the pole that Phaethon misguided is most aglow, and on this side and on that the light diminishes, so was that pacific oriflamme quickened in the middle, on either side in equal measure tempering its flame. And at the midpoint, with outstretched wings, I saw more than a thousand Angels making festival, each one distinct in effulgence and in ministry. I saw there, smiling to their sports and to their songs, a beauty which was gladness in the eyes of all the other saints. And had I equal wealth in speech as in conception, yet would I not dare to attempt the least of her delightfulness.

Bernard, when he saw my eyes fixed and intent on the object of his own burning glow, turned his own with such affection to her, that he made mine more ardent in their gazing.

CANTO XXXII

With his love fixed on his Delight, that contemplator freely assumed the office of a teacher, and began these holy words, "The wound which Mary closed and anointed, that one who is so beautiful at her feet is she who opened it and pierced it. Below her, in the order which the third seats make, sits Rachel with Beatrice, as you see. Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and she who was great-grandmother of the singer who, through sorrow for his sin, cried '*Miserere mei*,' you may see, thus from rank to rank in gradation downward, as with the name of each I go downward through the rose from petal to petal. And from the seventh row downwards, even as down to it, Hebrew women follow in succession, dividing all the tresses of the flower;

because, according to the look which their faith turned to Christ, these are the wall by which the sacred stairway is divided. On this side, wherein the flower is mature in all its petals, are seated those who believed in Christ yet to come. On the other side, where the half-circles are broken by vacant places, sit those who turned their faces toward Christ already come. And as on this side the glorious seat of the Lady of Heaven, and the other seats below it, make so great a partition, thus, opposite, does the seat of the great John who, ever holy, endured the desert and martyrdom, and then Hell for two years; and beneath him, Francis and Benedict and Augustine and others were allotted thus to divide, as far down as here, from circle to circle. Now behold the depth of the divine foresight, for one and the other aspect of the faith shall fill this garden equally. And know that, downward from the row which cleaves midway the two dividing lines, they are seated for no merit of their own, but for that of others, under certain conditions; for all these are spirits absolved before they had true power of choice. Well can you perceive it by their faces and by their childish voices, if you look well upon them and if you listen to them.

"Now you are perplexed, and in perplexity are silent; but I will loose the hard knot wherein your subtle thoughts are binding you. Within the amplitude of this realm a casual point can have no place, any more than can sorrow, or thirst, or hunger; for whatever you see is established by eternal law, so that the correspondence is exact between the ring and finger. And therefore this company, hastened to true life, is not *sine causa* more or less excellent here among themselves. The King, through whom this realm reposes in such great love and in such great delight that no will dares for more, creating all the minds in His glad sight, at His own pleasure endows with grace diversely—and here let the fact suffice. And this is clearly and expressly noted for you in Holy Scripture in those twins whose anger was stirred within their mother's womb. Therefore, according to the color of the locks, of such grace needs must the lofty light crown them according to their worth. Wherefore, without merit of their own works, they are placed in different ranks, differing only in the primal keenness of vision. In the early ages, their parents' faith alone, with their own innocence, sufficed for their salvation;

After those first ages were complete, it was needful for males, through circumcision, to acquire power for their innocent wings; but after the time of grace had come, without perfect baptism in Christ such innocence was held there below.

"Look now upon the face which most resembles Christ, for only its brightness can prepare you to see Christ."

I saw such gladness rain down upon her, borne in the holy minds created to fly through that height, that all I had seen before had not held me in suspense of such great marveling, nor showed me such likeness to God. And that Love which first descended there, singing "*Ave Maria, gratia plena*," now spread his wings before her. On all sides the blessed Court responded to the divine song, so that every face became the brighter therefor.

"O holy father, who for my sake endure to be here below, leaving the sweet place in which by eternal lot you have your seat, who is that angel who with such joy looks into the eyes of our Queen, so enamored that he seems afire?" Thus did I again recur to the teaching of him who drew beauty from Mary, as the morning star from the sun.

And he to me, "Confidence and grace, as much as there can be in angel and in soul, are all in him, and we would have it so, for it is he who bore the palm down to Mary, when the Son of God willed to load Himself with the burden of our flesh.

"But come now with your eyes, as I proceed in speaking, and note the great patricians of this most just and pious empire. Those two who sit there above, most happy for being nearest to the Empress, are, as it were, two roots of this rose: he who is beside her upon the left is that Father because of whose audacious tasting the human race tastes such bitterness. On the right you see that ancient Father of Holy Church to whom Christ entrusted the keys of this beauteous flower. And he who saw, before he died, all the grievous times of the fair Bride who was won with the spear and the nails sits at his side; and beside the other rests that leader, under whom the thankless, fickle, and stubborn people lived on manna. Opposite Peter you see Anna sitting, so content to gaze upon her daughter that she moves not her eyes as she sings Hosannah. And opposite the greatest father of a family sits Lucy, who moved your lady when you were bending your brows downward to your ruin.

"But because the time flies that brings sleep upon you, we will stop here, like a good tailor that cuts the garment according to his cloth, and we will turn our eyes to the Primal Love, so that, gazing toward Him, you may penetrate, as far as that can be, into His effulgence. But lest, perchance, you fall back, moving your wings and thinking to advance, grace must be obtained by prayer, grace from her who has power to aid you; and do you follow me with your affection so that your heart depart not from my words."

And he began this holy prayer:

CANTO XXXIII

"VIRGIN MOTHER, daughter of thy Son, humble and exalted more than any creature, fixed goal of the eternal counsel, thou art she who didst so enoble human nature that its Maker did not disdain to become its creature. In thy womb was rekindled the Love under whose warmth this flower in the eternal peace has thus unfolded. Here thou art for us the noonday torch of charity, and below among mortals thou art the living fount of hope. Lady, thou art so great and so availest, that whoso would have grace and has not recourse to thee, his desire seeks to fly without wings. Thy loving-kindness not only succors him who asks, but oftentimes freely foreruns the asking.

In thee is mercy, in thee pity, in thee munificence, in thee is found whatever of goodness is in any creature. Now this man, who from the lowest pit of the universe even to here has seen one by one the spiritual lives, implores thee of thy grace for power such that he may be able with his eyes to rise still higher toward the last salvation. And I, who never for my own vision burned more than I do for his, proffer to thee all my prayers, and pray that they be not scant, that with thy prayers thou wouldst dispel for him every cloud of his mortality, so that the Supreme Pleasure may be disclosed to him. Further I pray thee, Queen, who canst do whatsoever thou wilt, that thou preserve sound for him his affections, after so great a vision. Let thy protection vanquish human impulses. Behold Beatrice, with how many saints, for my prayers clasping their hands to thee."

The eyes beloved and reverenced by God, fixed upon him who prayed, showed us how greatly devout prayers do please her; then they were turned to the Eternal Light, wherein we may not believe that any creature's eye finds its way so clear.

And I, who was drawing near to the end of all desires, raised to its utmost, even as I ought, the ardor of my longing.

Bernard was signing to me with a smile to look upward, but I was already of myself such as he wished; for my sight, becoming pure, was entering more and more through the beam of the lofty Light which in Itself is true.

Thenceforward my vision was greater than speech can show, which fails at such a sight, and at such excess memory fails. As is he who dreaming sees, and after the dream the passion remains imprinted and the rest returns not to the mind; such am I, for my vision almost wholly fades away, yet does the sweetness that was born of it still drop within my heart. Thus is the snow unsealed by the sun; thus in the wind, on the light leaves, the Sibyl's oracle was lost.

O Light Supreme that art so far uplifted above mortal conceiving, relend to my mind a little of what Thou didst appear, and give my tongue such power that it may leave only a single spark of Thy glory for the folk to come; for, by returning somewhat to my memory and by sounding a little in these lines, more of Thy victory shall be conceived.

I believe that, because of the keenness of the living ray which I endured, I should have been lost if my eyes had been turned from it.

I remember that on this account I was the bolder to sustain it, until I united my gaze with the Infinite Goodness.

O abounding grace whereby I presumed to fix my look through the Eternal Light so far that all my sight was spent therein.

In its depth I saw ingathered, bound by love in one single volume, that which is dispersed in leaves throughout the universe: substances and accidents and their relations, as though fused together in such a way that what I tell is but a simple light. The universal form of this knot I believe that I saw, because, in telling this, I feel my joy increase.

A single moment makes for me greater oblivion that five and twenty centuries have wrought upon the enterprise that made Neptune wonder at the shadow of the Argo. Thus my mind, all rapt, was gazing, fixed, motionless and intent, ever enkindled by its gazing. In that Light one becomes such that it is impossible he should ever consent to turn himself from it for other sight; for the good, which is the object of the will, is all gathered in it, and outside of it that is defective which is perfect there.

Now will my speech fall more short, even in respect to that which I remember, than that of an infant who still bathes his tongue at the breast.

Not because more than one simple semblance was in the Living Light wherein I was gazing, which ever is such as it was before; but through my sight, which was growing strong in me as I looked, one sole appearance, even as I changed, was altering itself to me.

Within the profound and shining subsistence of the lofty Light appeared to me three circles of three colors and one magnitude; and one seemed reflected by the other, as rainbow by rainbow, and the third seemed fire breathed forth equally from the one and the other.

O how scant is speech, and how feeble to my conception! and this, to what I saw, is such that it is not enough to call it little.

O Light Eternal, who alone abidest in Thyself, alone knowest Thyself, and, known to Thyself and knowing, lovest and smilest on Thyself!

That circling which, thus begotten, appeared in Thee as reflected light, when my eyes had dwelt on it for a time, seemed to me depicted with our image within itself and in its own color, wherefore my sight was entirely set upon it.

As is the geometer who wholly applies himself to measure the circle, and finds not, in pondering, the principle of which he is in need, such was I at that new sight. I wished to see how the image conformed to the circle and how it has its place therein;

but my own wings were not sufficient for that, save that my mind was smitten by a flash wherein its wish came to it. Here power failed the lofty phantasy; but already my desire and my will were revolved, like a wheel that is evenly moved, by the Love which moves the sun and the other stars.